Mystery Roses of the Australian Tea-Noisette-China Collection

M. E. Furness
Heritage Roses in Australia Inc.

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HRIAI was formed in 1979 and is a fellowship of those whose aim is to advance the preservation, cultivation, distribution and study of old garden roses, roses no longer in general commercial cultivation, roses of historical importance, and species roses and their hybrids.

Front Cover: "David's Dilemma" (p. 26), photo: Margaret Furness.
Previous page: "Octavus Weld" (p. 54), photo: Billy West.
P. 46: "Mrs Goode's Special Tea", photo: Billy West.
P. 76: "Bunya Mountains", photo: Margaret Furness.
Back cover: "Mystery Cream Tea" (p. 50), photo: Pat Toolan.

Acknowledgements:
I thank all those members of HRIAI who have provided assistance and advice for this booklet, especially those whose observations or research have been used in the text, and the main photographers; and the proof-readers for their gentle guidance. Barbara May and Jane Zammit, both now late, did much of the work on the Rookwood Teas.

In memory of gardens loved and lost.

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Introduction

Teas reserve the right to vary in every way possible…

Tea (or Tea-scented) roses are descended from *Rosa gigantea* and China roses via recurrent Chinese garden hybrids from temperate to subtropical areas. When such plants were introduced to western countries in the early 19th century, rose breeders were eager to make use of their repeat-flowering capacity, which was a rarity in Europe, and their new range of colours and fragrance.

Around 1,000 Teas were brought to or bred in Australia, and some of the survivors lost their original names over time. Identifying Teas is made more complex by their ability to vary in colour, form, petal count and growth habit with environmental conditions. Early descriptions were very rarely precise, and illustrations were often stylised. In addition, many Tea roses were closely related and very similar in appearance. Few of these roses have a scent that is distinctive and stable enough to become a distinguishing feature. Fertility or apparent lack of it isn't a definite identifier, as it may be altered by assisted pollination.

In 2006, members of HRIAI began putting together a collection of what was hoped to be all the Teas, Noisettes and Chinas in Australia, in part to study them in the same growing conditions at Renmark, South Australia. (The Collection is no longer suitable to visit.) Australia has fewer Noisettes than Tea-Noisettes. Found roses, mostly gathered from old gardens and churchyards, had been given study names, indicated by double inverted commas; those collected in many places had acquired multiple names. In 2019-2021, photo galleries of potentially identifying details were published in the HRIAI quarterly journal, with brief descriptive notes, of the Teas and Noisettes whose original names remained unknown or uncertain (excluding those which are in commerce under incorrect names world-wide). This booklet is a slight expansion of those short articles, as a work in progress. A few Teas have been added whose identity is probably established, but which lack continuity of the name. They are part of the history of foundling Teas in Australia.

Comments regarding sale or circulation of roses refer to Australia.

Detailed descriptions of some of these plants can be found in *Tea Roses: Old Roses for Warm Gardens*, Chapman et al, 2008, and on www.helpmefind.com/roses.

A few of these intriguing survivors are in commerce, some under incorrect names, and HRIAI members share the others around, as earlier gardeners did. All Teas, Noisettes and Chinas will grow from cuttings and are resilient grown that way. Some specialist nurseries will bud them on request.

Margaret Furness

Illustrations

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Photos supplied by Lynne Chapman, Margaret Furness, Hillary Merrifield, Pat Toolan, Billy West, Jane Zammit.
Additional photos:
Nadene Edwards: p. 17, new leaves; p. 19, green leaves.
Leonie Kearney: p. 60, prickle photo.
Julie Lack: pp. 34-35, bud photo and lower three left photos.
Margie McClelland, wildprints@bigpond.com: p. 17, bush; 18, half-open bud; p. 19, bush.
Jill Obst: p. 16, first two photos; p. 30, dark pink flower; p. 75, bush.
Patricia Routley: p. 66, hip.
Brenda Weir (assumed): p. 17, yellow half-open bud.
John Zwar: p. 74, bushes; p. 75, flower lower left.

'Bishop's Lodge' at Hay, on the Murrumbidgee River in western New South Wales, was built in 1888 to be the home of the Anglican bishops of Riverina. The Lodge is a remarkable architectural achievement, designed to be built in a remote area and to cope with extreme summer heat and expansile soils. The garden contains a number of unidentifed roses that have survived prolonged droughts.

'Bishop's Lodge' is open to visitors. Plants from the garden and from properties on the Hay Plains may be for sale. bishopslodge@westnet.com.au

Rookwood Necropolis, Sydney, (not illustrated) has many unidentified roses, including eight Teas. All its plant material is protected by law.

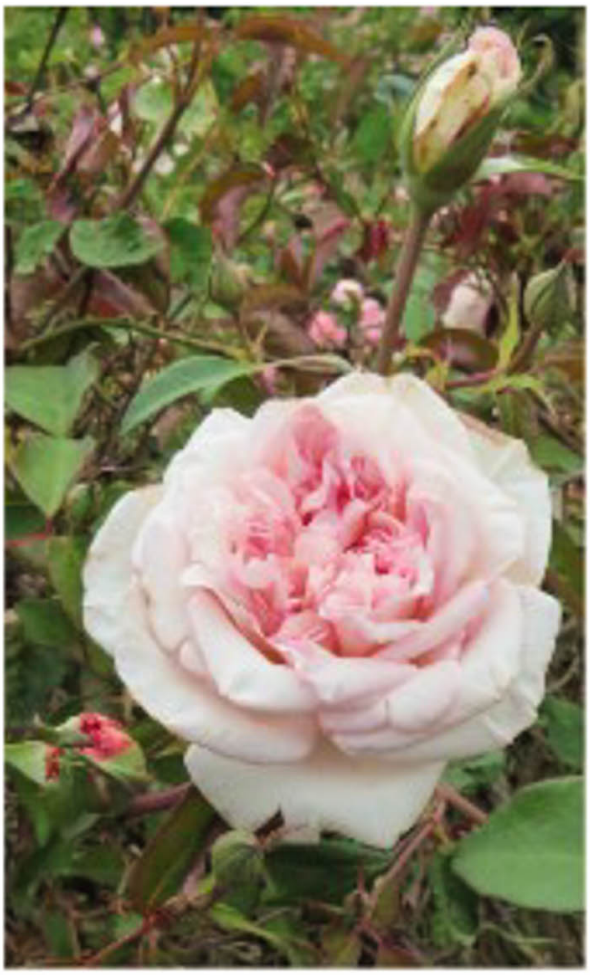
'Yallum Park' is a grand mansion in the south-east of South Australia, built in the late 1870s. The garden, begun in 1863, contains many old trees. As well as the Tea and the Noisette, of interest is a single form of *Rosa indica major* as a surviving understock.

'Yallum Park' is privately owned, but is occasionally open to visitors. The house has an extensive range of William Morris wallpapers.

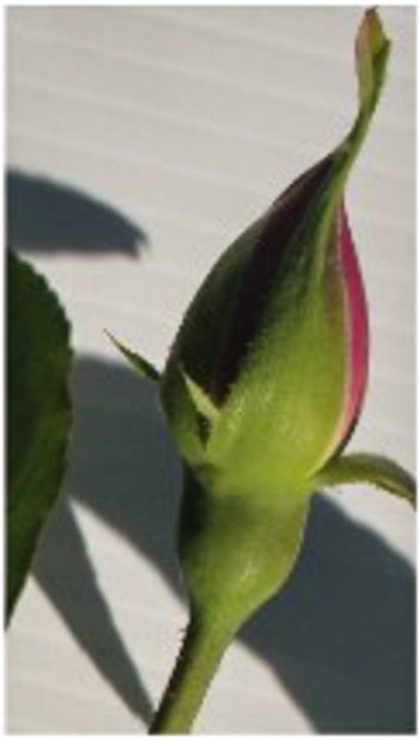
"Agnes Saffron's Early Tea"

Collected from a farm garden near Daylesford, Victoria.
Named for the owner of the house, a keen cook and gardener.
It has similarities to "Arcadia Louisiana Tea" in the USA.

Flowers are very double, and can be lightly quartered. They are mostly parchment-coloured or soft apricot, sometimes pink; darker in the centre. They can ball, and don't self-clean.
They have a light Tea scent.
The receptacle base and the pedicel have stalked glands, and the pedicel has fine prickles.
No hips seen.
The leaflets are substantial in texture, have conspicuously impressed veins and reach a width that is broad for a Tea.
The new growth is burgundy, sometimes dramatically so: the photo below shows the spring flush.
The prickles are variably hooked.
Medium height, spreading.



"Agnes Smith"

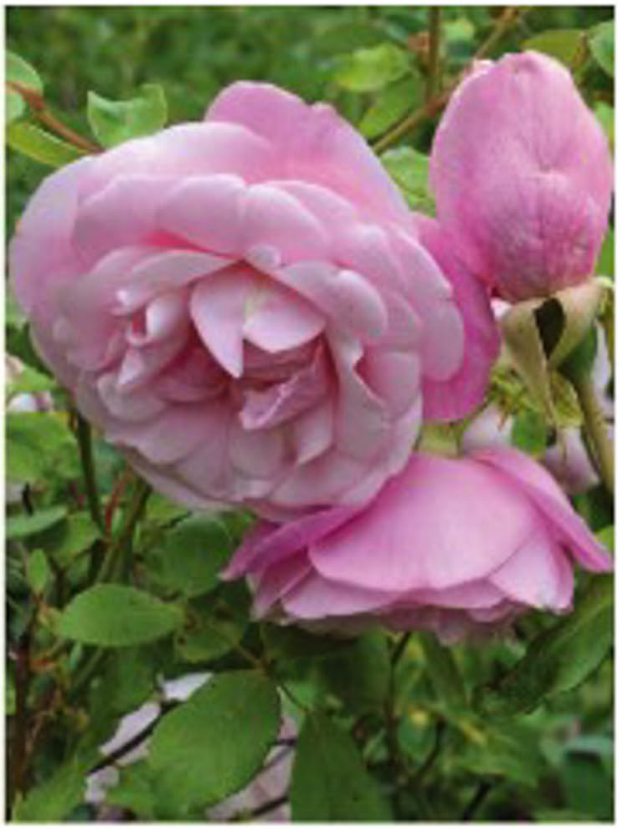


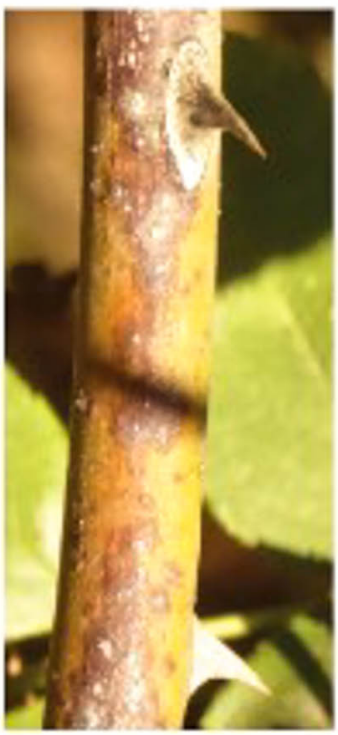
China-Tea. Collected at Rookwood Necropolis from two graves, possibly also from the Adelaide Hills, SA. It is sold incorrectly as 'Irène Watts' and as 'Odorata'.

Flower form and colour vary with the seasons. Blooms can be whitish with the palest pink blush, or can be quite strongly pink. The bud colour can be deceptive - often a much deeper shade of pink than the flower. The warm weather blooms are looser, with fewer petals, while the cool weather flowers are much fuller. Most blooms nod their heads. It flowers in flushes, including through winter in warm areas.
Mild sweet Tea fragrance.
The receptacle is smooth, and the pedicel is glandular.
Ripe hips are orange.
The prickles are straight or curved, and can be paired.
Low-medium height.

It has been suggested as possibly 'Hume's Blush Tea-scented China', but as the original rose has not been seen for over 150 years this is impossible to prove.

Below, "Agnes Smith" as it grew on the 1901 grave at Rookwood. The leaf colour in this photo is not true to life.

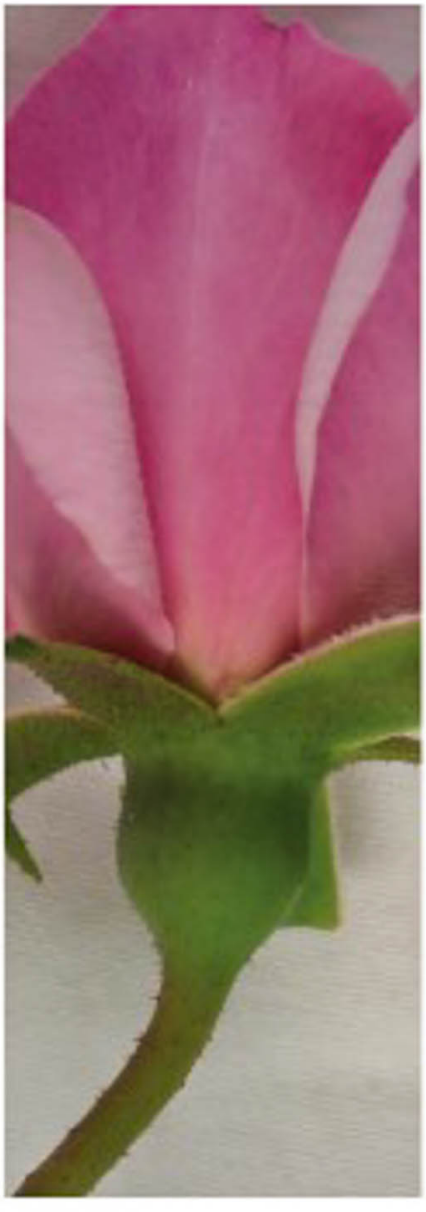




"Alexandra Pink Tea"

Collected in Victoria, it is the same as **"Isabel Smith"**, collected at Rookwood from a 1906 grave. It is circulated as 'Mme de Tartas'; we will investigate this prospective identity further when suitable DNA testing is available to us.

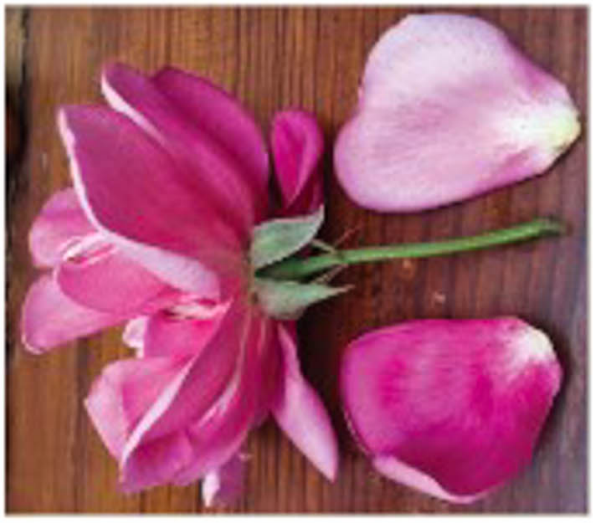
Flowers are double to very double, sometimes in large inflorescences. They are usually soft pink with a yellow nub, and darker reverses, so the bud can be darker pink than the bloom. The petal edges curl back. The flowers can be apricot in autumn. They don't self-clean.
Blooms have a light dry Tea scent.
The lower third or half of the receptacle is glandular.
The pedicel has stalked glands with a few small prickles.
Hips are large and round, and can age to bright orange or red.
The leaflets are elongated, with undulating edges, and are leathery when mature.
The prickles on canes age from red to grey.
Tall spreading growth.



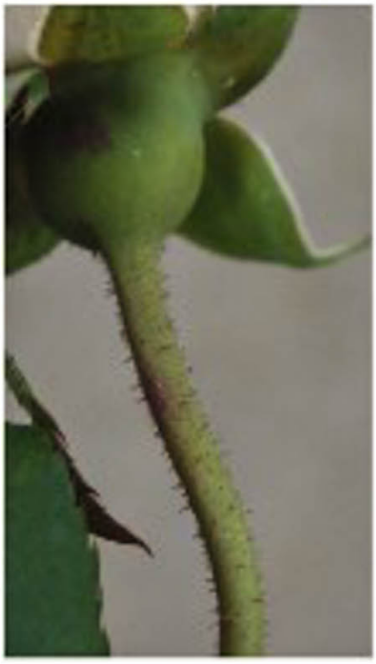
"Almerta Orchard Pink"

Collected in the Barossa Valley, SA, from the same farm garden, planted before 1920, as "Mrs Heggie's Red Tea" (p. 48).
It may also be in Hagley, northern Tasmania.
The same as "**McClinton Tea**" in the USA.

The flowers are darker pink on the reverses, and usually at the base of the petals. They are usually barely double, opening to show the stamens: rarely very double. Good winter flowering.
The scent is sweet Tea, sometimes with overtones of phlox, at times strong and wafting.
The receptacle base and pedicel are glandular.
It sets many hips.
Leaflets have conspicuous impressed veins.
It is well-armed on new and old wood.
Moderate height, spreading.



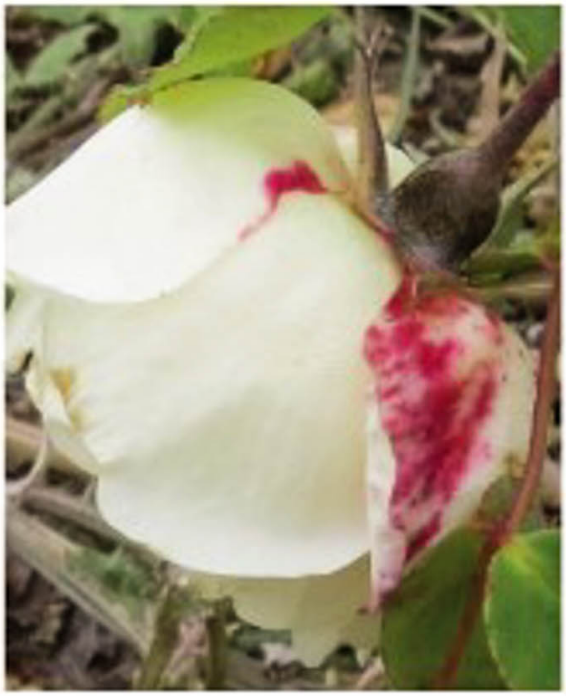
"Bird Children"

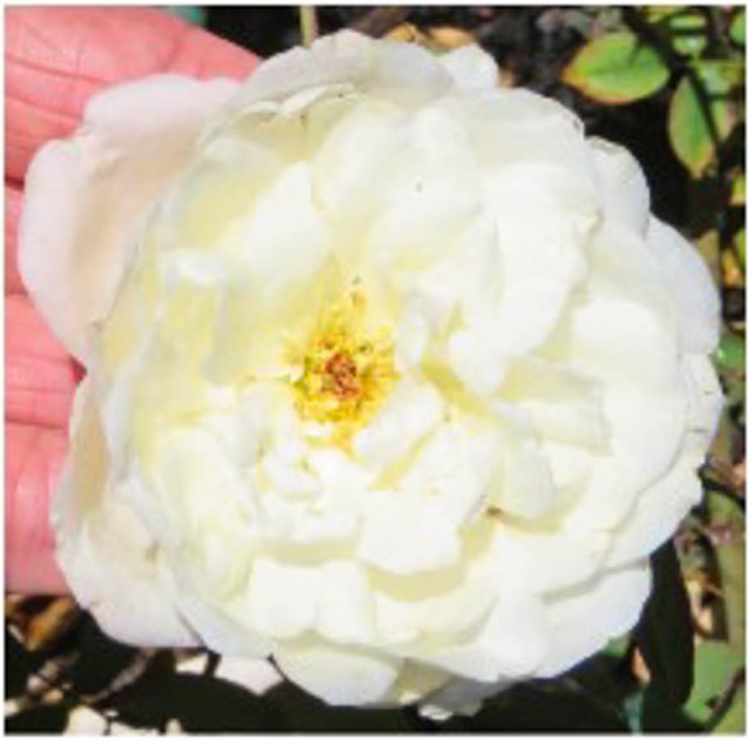


Collected from two graves at Rookwood, one from 1895. It has a sport or reversion, **"Bird Children Pink"**, which is variable in colour, pink or cream at the same time.

The white can have red flashes on the guard petals. Flowers are double to very double, and some hang their heads. They occur singly or in clusters, or in a candelabrum on a watershoot. Petal edges roll back. Balling sometimes occurs in spring.
The flowers have a light sweet Tea scent.
The receptacle is variable in shape, and has some glands at the base. The pedicel is densely glandular.
Very few hips persist; there are occasional seeds.
The leaflets can be wavy-edged.
The prickles are long and variable in shape, and age from red to grey.
Moderate height, spreading.

There are some resemblances to illustrations of '**Souvenir d'un Ami**' (1844) and its white sport, '**The Queen**'.

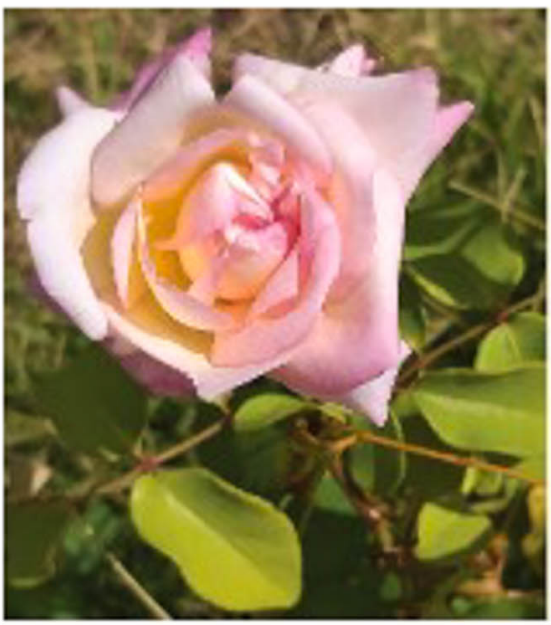


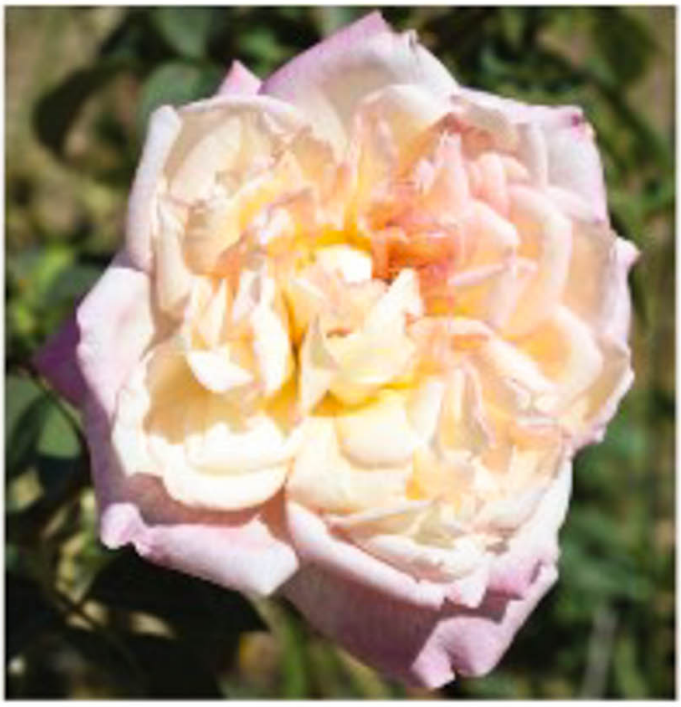


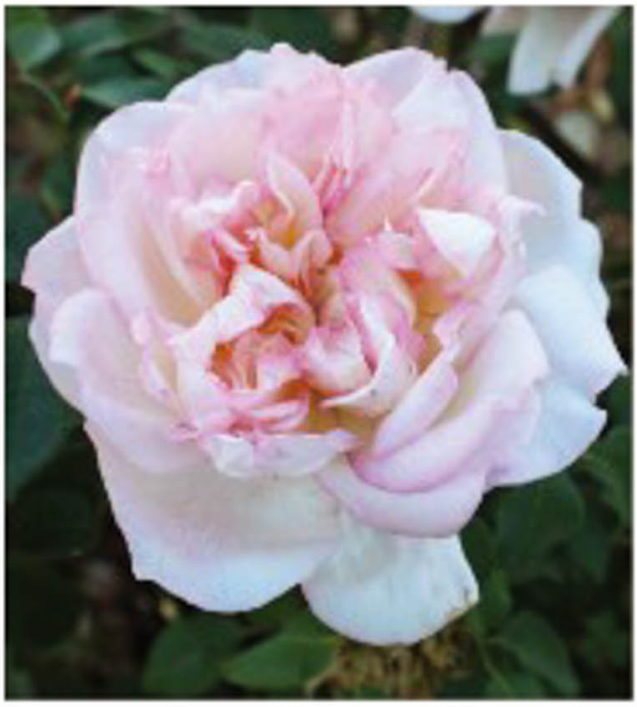
"Bishop's Lodge Ah Mow"

Collected at Hay, NSW, in the late 20th century, and named then for the Chinese gardener who worked at the Lodge for 30 years from the early 1890s.

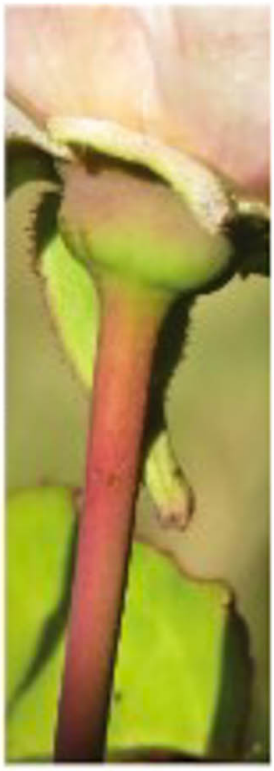
The flower is similar to "Kombacy Marianne" (p. 38), but among other differences, blooms are more likely to have lemon-yellow at the heart, the flower stems are shorter, and the receptacle and pedicel are smooth.
The flowers are double. Petal edges are pink, at times strongly so in full sun or warm weather. Flowers can be quilled. They are readily damaged by adverse weather.
Light Tea scent.
The centre is usually covered by a confused knot of petals. No mature hips observed.
It has hooked prickles, which can be paired, and age from red to dark brown.
The pedicel can be grooved.
Its growth habit is similar to 'Safrano', spreading. In shade it can exceed 2.2m high.
It does best in an open position, and with some care.





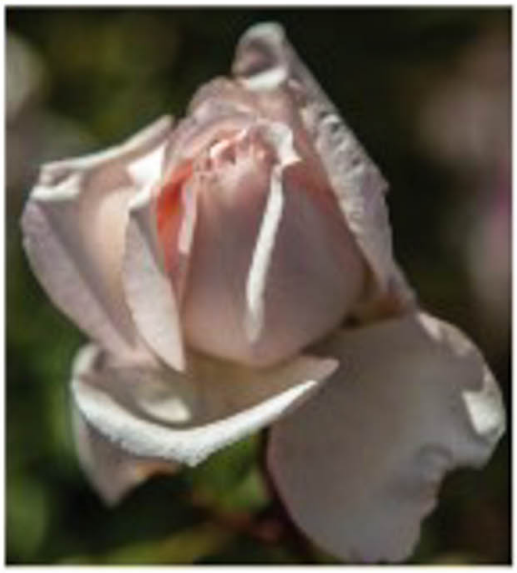


"Bishop's Lodge Jane Isabella Linton"

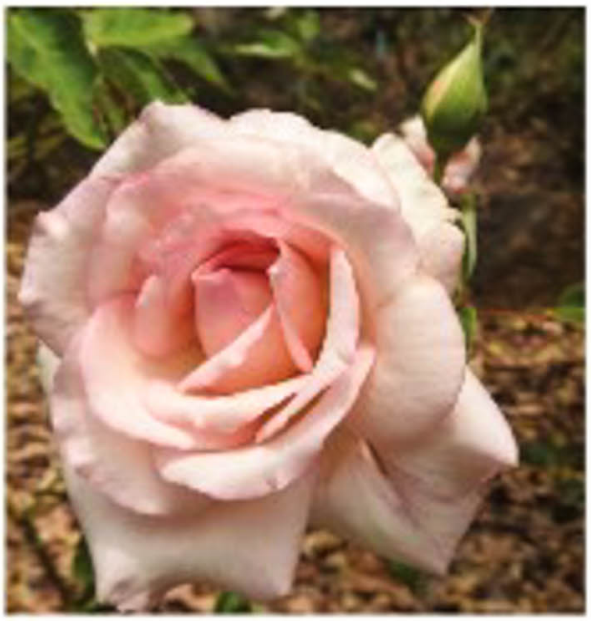


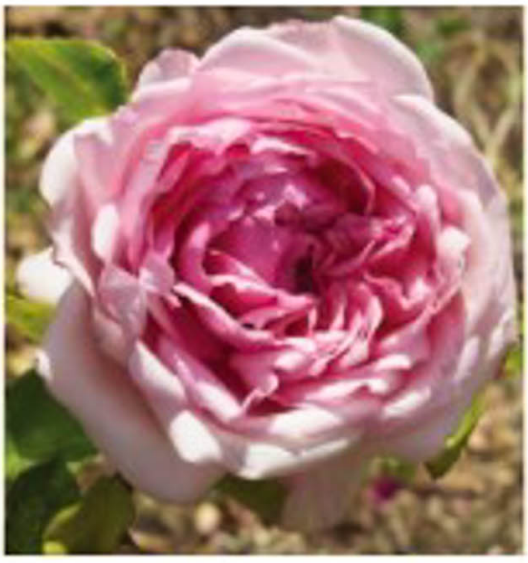
Collected at Hay, NSW. It was named for the wife of the first bishop.

Flowers are solitary or in clusters. They are very double, sometimes loosely quartered. The colour varies with the season but can be darker pink in the centre, or on the tips of the petals. An occasional deeper pink stripe has been reported by others. Flowers can ball at times.
Tea scent, varying from light to strong.
The receptacle and pedicel have no visible glands, and the pedicel can be grooved.
Hips with seeds are very rare.
The prickles are straight or curved, and can be paired. They are red on new growth and age brown.
Spreading growth.



It has similarities to 'Maman Cochet' (1892); DNA comparison is pending, to determine whether it is a sport of 'Maman Cochet'.



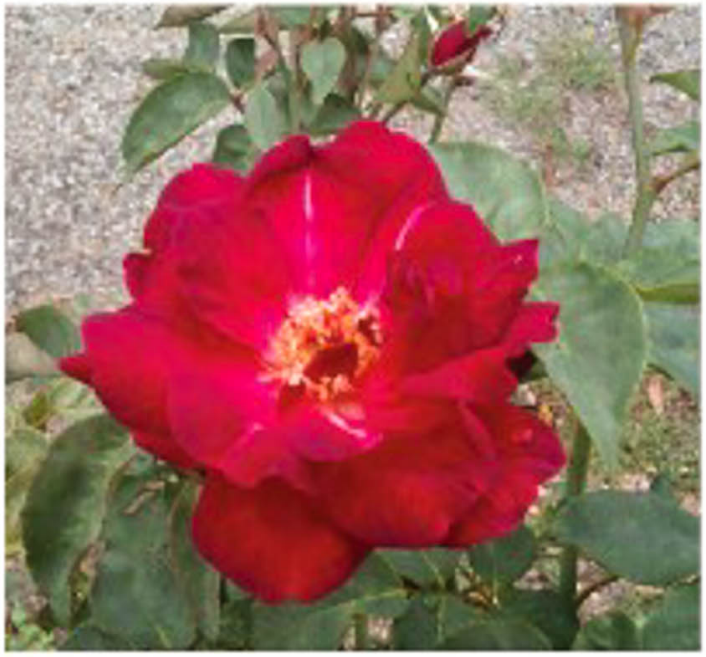


"Camnethan Cherry Red"

Synonym (syn.) "**Susan Irvine's Pink Tea**". Collected from an old farming property in Smeaton, Victoria. The garden was probably started in the late 19th century.
It has been sold in error as 'Beauty of Rosemawr', and vice versa.

The flowers are usually barely double, growing singly or in clusters. The petals are velvety red with a silver reverse, usually less prominent than in the photo below, and an occasional white stripe. It blues with age to magenta. Outer petals form a point, inner ones have a rolled-back edge.
Like other Teas it blooms in flushes, with good winter flowering in warm areas.
There can be a strong, soft Tea scent with fruity and floral notes.
The receptacles are variable in shape, and have a few glands at the base.
The pedicel is glandular and prickly.
Prickles range from moderate to sparse.
Tall bush, usually upright.

A similar plant was seen labelled 'Princesse de Sagan' in the USA.

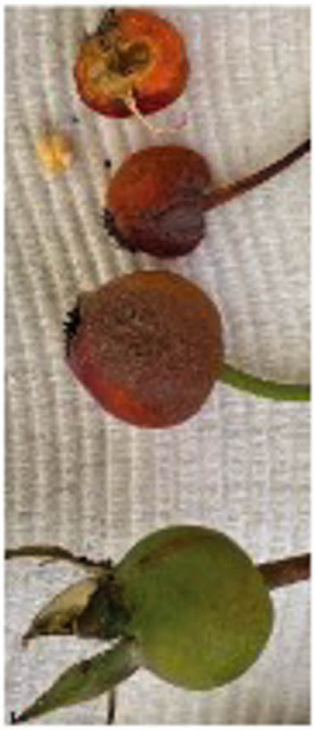


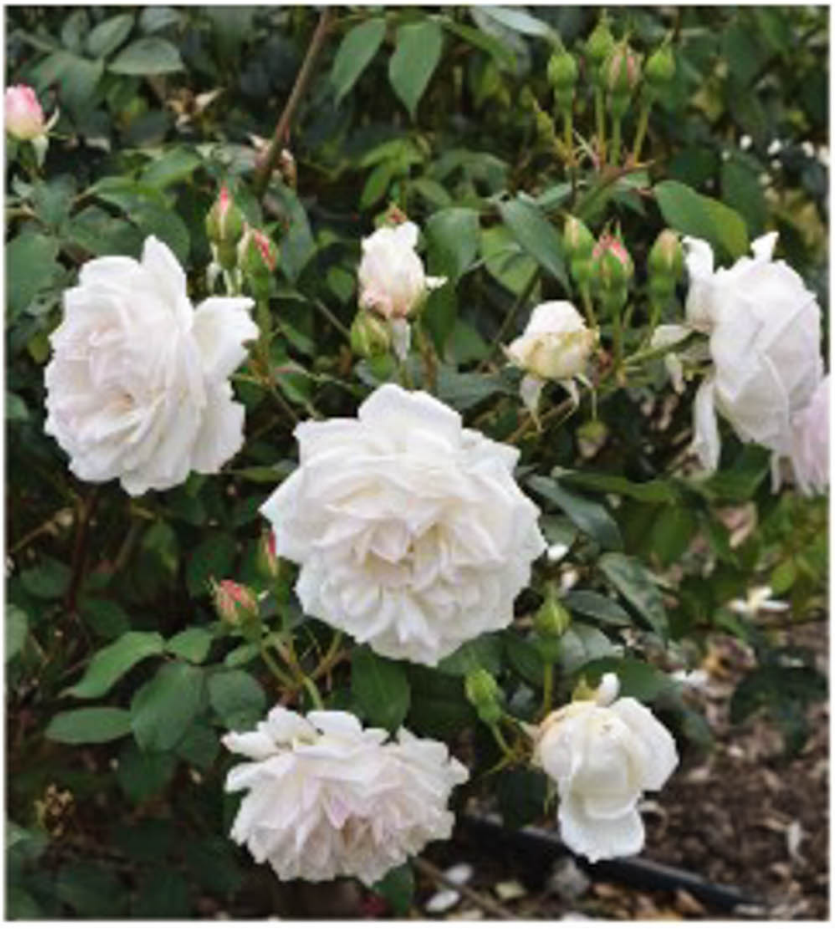
"Carlsruhe Maria Brühn"

Collected from an 1891 grave in mid-north South Australia.
The same rose has also been found overseas.

Probably '**Mlle de Sombreuil**' (Robert 1851).

It sometimes has more than 5 sepals. Flowers are double to very double, solitary or in clusters; sometimes light pink at first; more often white.
It can have red flashes on the guard petals.
Flowers can ball in wet weather.
The scent is complex, with a suggestion of violets.
Glandularity of the pedicels varies.
If left untrimmed it can produce many hips.
Prickles are variable in shape and size, red on new growth, sometimes paired.
The leaflets have a leaden cast.
The bush is upright-growing and spreading, with some Bourbon features. It sometimes produces long canes.



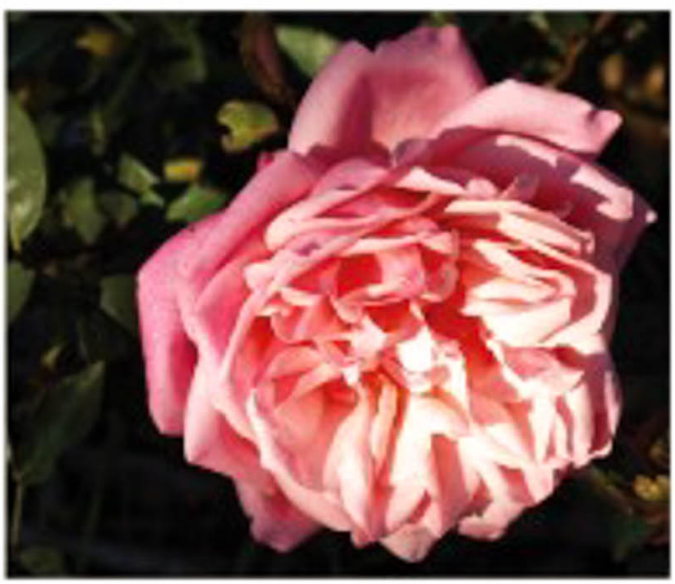


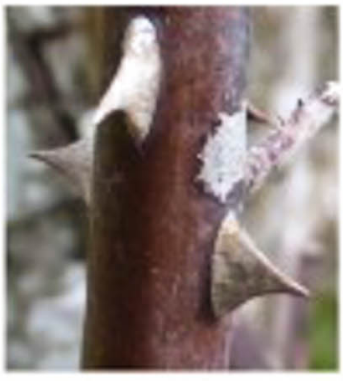
"Not Comtesse Riza du Parc"

Syn. **"Comtesse Riza du Parc (in Australia)"**. It was probably imported from the USA in the 1980s by Heather and Roy Rumsey as 'Comtesse Riza du Parc', and is sold as such.

It flowers prolifically for most of the year, with the colour and form widely variable with the seasons. Flowers occur singly or in clusters.
The stamens can be just visible in fully-open blooms.
The receptacle and pedicel are often slightly asymmetrical.
The pedicel has occasional glands.
Light fragrance.
It sets many hips.
It is well-armed with prickles on old and new wood, extending high up flower stems to the base of the pedicels.
Vigorous bush, tall and wide.

Overseas it has been seen labelled 'Dr Grill', 'Mme Charles', 'Mme Falcot' and the "Seven Days Rose".



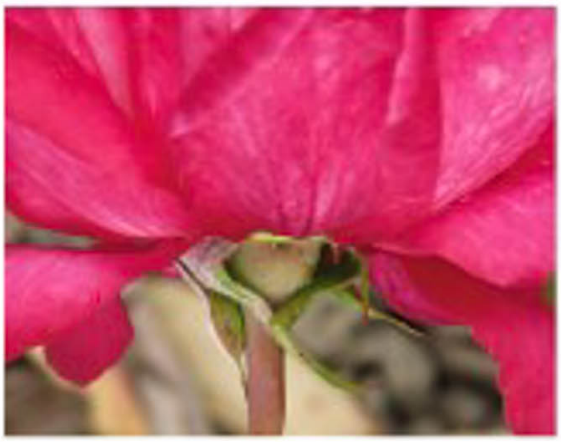


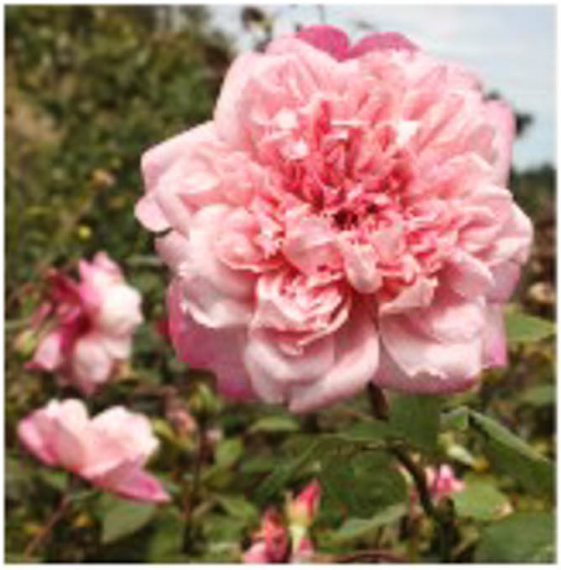
"David's Dilemma"

So named because renowned Renmark rosarian, the late David Ruston, couldn't remember how it reached him. Syn. **"David's Red Tea"** syn. **"Canonvale (under) Figtree Tea"**. Collected from an old garden at Yea, Victoria.

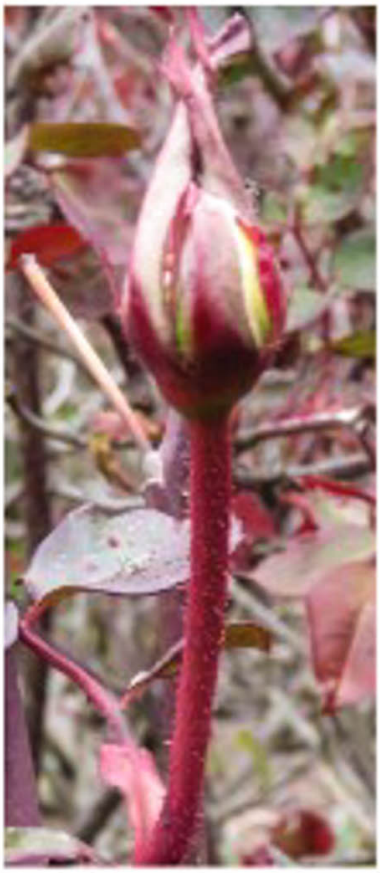
"David's Dilemma" matches early descriptions of **'Socrate'** (Robert & Moreau 1858) better than others grown under this name. 'Socrate' has offspring recorded, mainly as pollen parent.

Flowers are double to very double, sometimes loosely quartered. They can have central pads of in-folded petals, sometimes with a darker pink or red rim of reflexing guard petals. The colour is variable, and can have a lilac tinge. (See also front cover.) Occasionally the flowers are red. Blooms are often carried singly; they last well as cut flowers. They can be swan-necked. Flowers can ball or proliferate.
Distinct peach scent, becoming sharper as it ages.
There are glands at the receptacle base. The pedicels are long, and can have some glands and low prickles.
No mature hips observed.
It is well-armed on new and old wood.
Leaflets are burgundy when new.
Good cutting material is sparse.
Medium height, spreading.





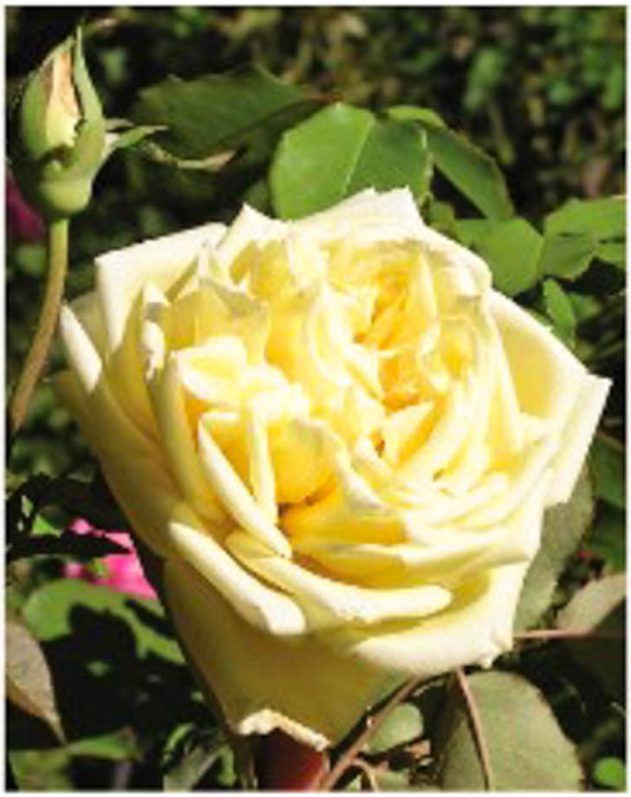
"Fake Perle"

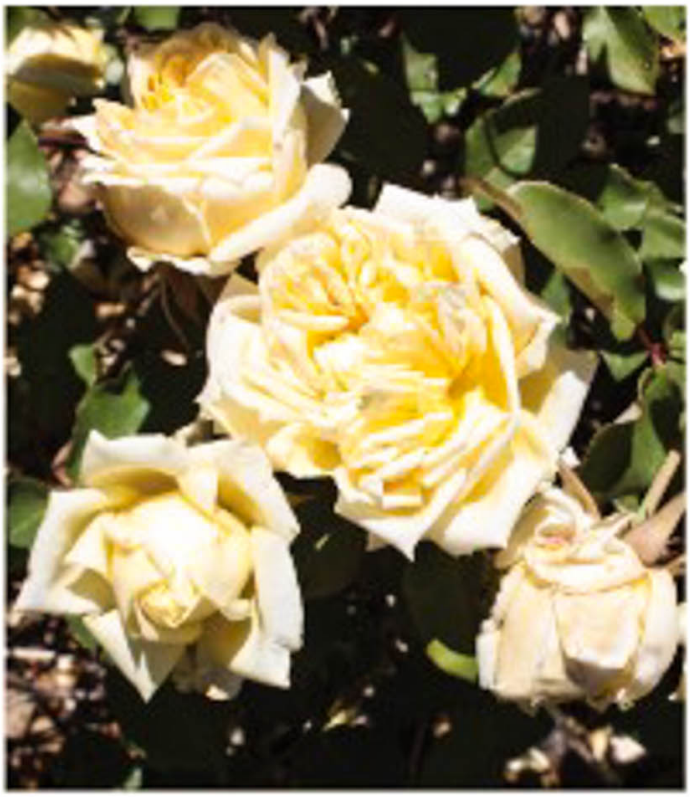


Sent to WA as 'Perle des Jardins', hence the study name.
Syn. **"David's Not Maréchal Niel"**, from a mislabelled old plant at Ruston's, Renmark, SA.
It has been circulated incorrectly as 'Maréchal Niel' although it is not a climber.
It has similarities to the "Giannini Tea" of California.

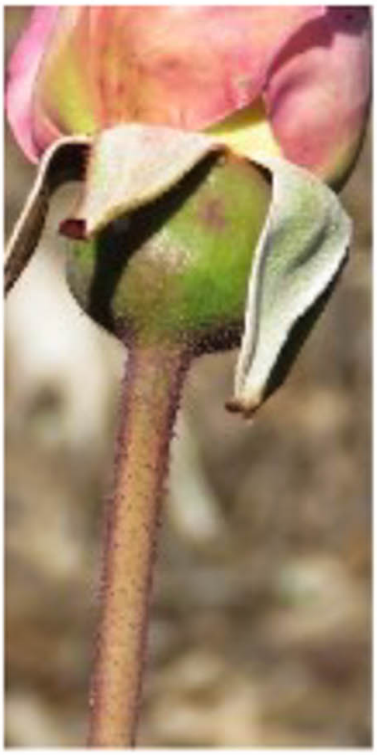
The flowers are pure, clear yellow; very double. Very large inflorescences are common.
Strong, dry Tea fragrance.
The receptacle can be finely pimpled.
The pedicel is very glandular, with prickles especially near the base. It can be grooved.
No mature hips observed.
New growth and prickles are a deep burgundy.
Prickles on the canes vary from sparse to moderate.
Medium height, spreading.
Healthy.

DNA comparison with "Wood St Buff Yellow" (p. 72) is pending, to determine whether one is a sport of the other.



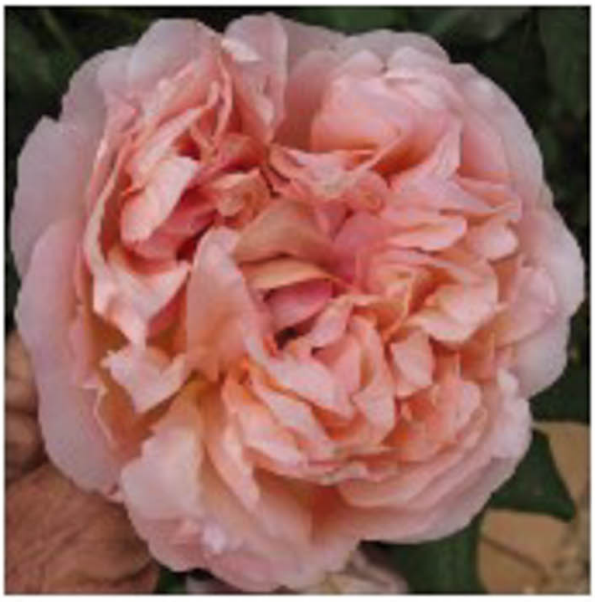


"George Whatson"



Collected at Rookwood, from a 1919 grave.

The flowers range from light to dark pink, rarely apricot. The petals are variably darker on the reverse, with a green nub in the bud stage. Petal edges can roll outwards. The flowers are very double, and occasionally quilled. They are usually nodding, and occur singly or in a candelabrum on a watershoot. They can ball in spring, and proliferation can occur. The centre is often covered by a confused knot of petals.
Light Tea scent, at times barely detectable.
The base of the receptacle is glandular, as is the pedicel, which can be grooved.
No viable hips observed.
It is well-armed with prickles on old and new wood, extending high up flower stems to the base of the pedicels.
The leaflets can be wavy-edged.
Medium to tall in time, spreading.

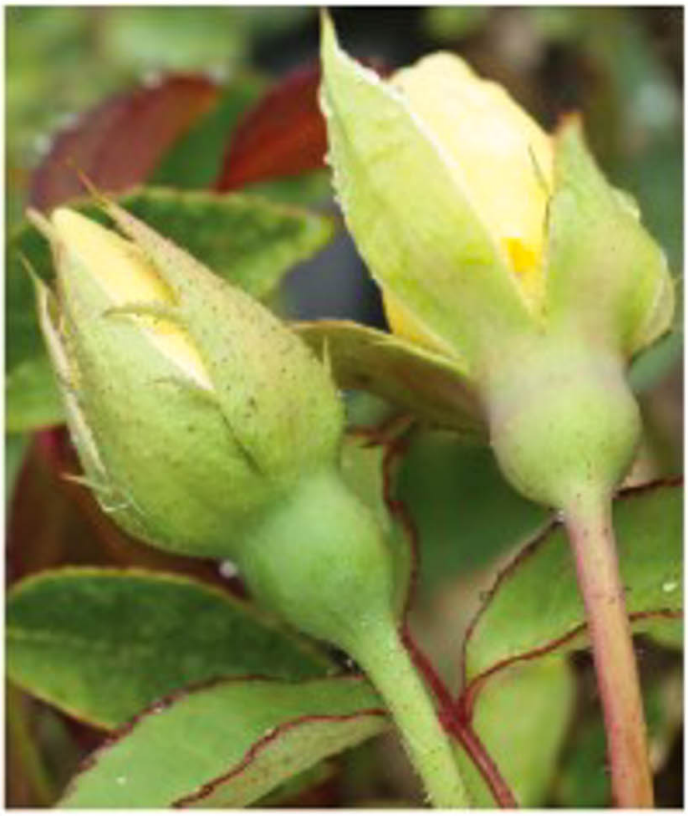


"Jane Cranston"

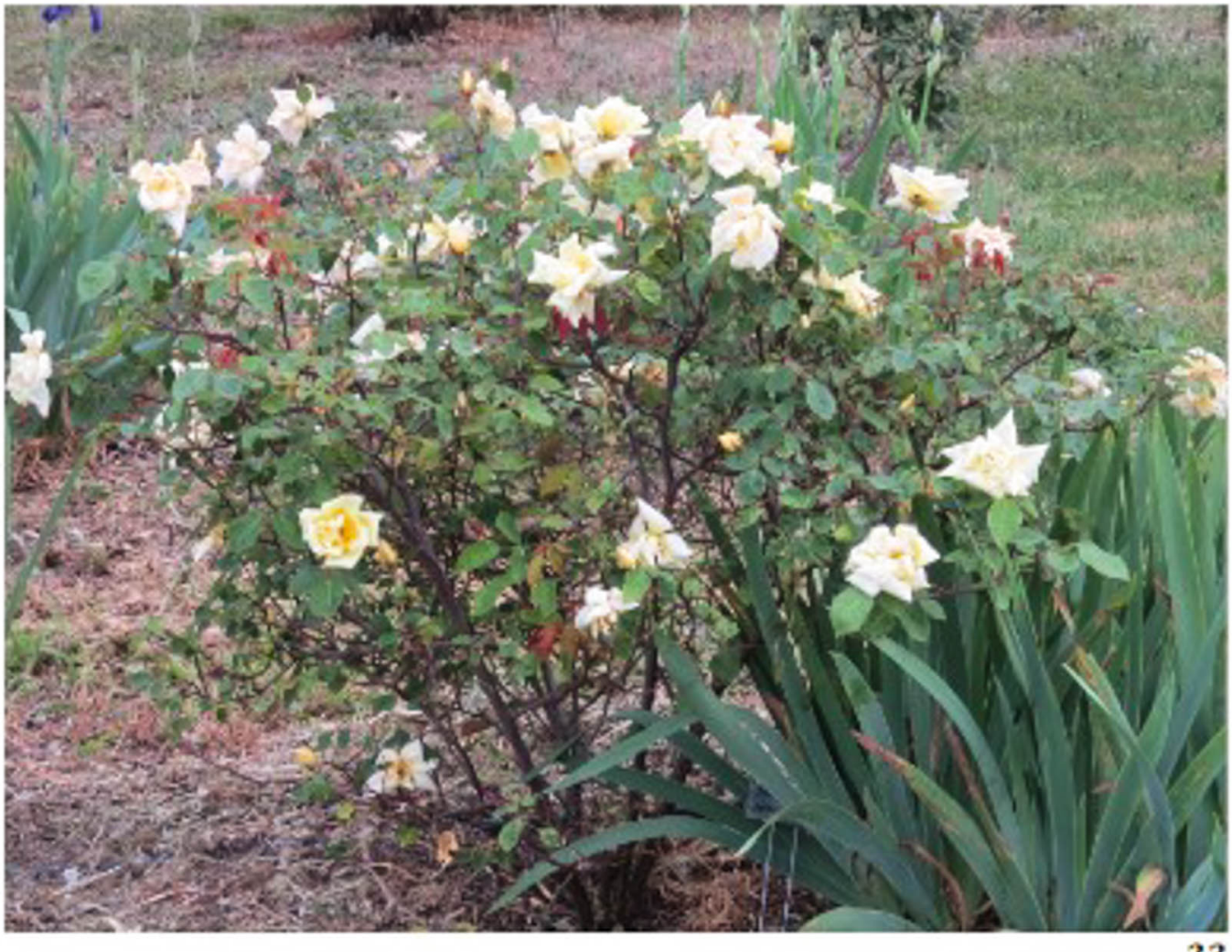
Collected in NSW at Rookwood from a pre-1909 planting.

The flowers are barely double, lemon-yellow fading to cream; borne singly or less commonly in clusters. It flowers in flushes, with good winter flowering.
Very light scent.
New growth is red. Receptacle and pedicel are green in summer, red in autumn. The receptacle base and pedicel are glandular, and the pedicel has some prickles.
It sets a few hips, which age red to brown.
Prickles are sparse.
Low-growing, can be spreading.

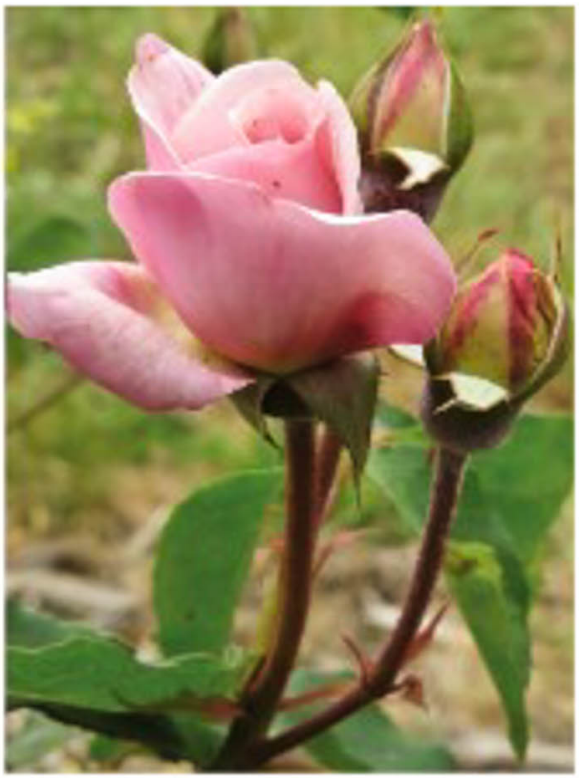
It has similarities to 'Isabella Sprunt' (a 'Safrano' sport) but is much less vigorous. DNA comparison is pending, to assess whether it is a sport of the 'Safrano' line.



Left, 'Isabella Sprunt';
right, "Jane Cranston".
Leaflets are of "Jane Cranston".

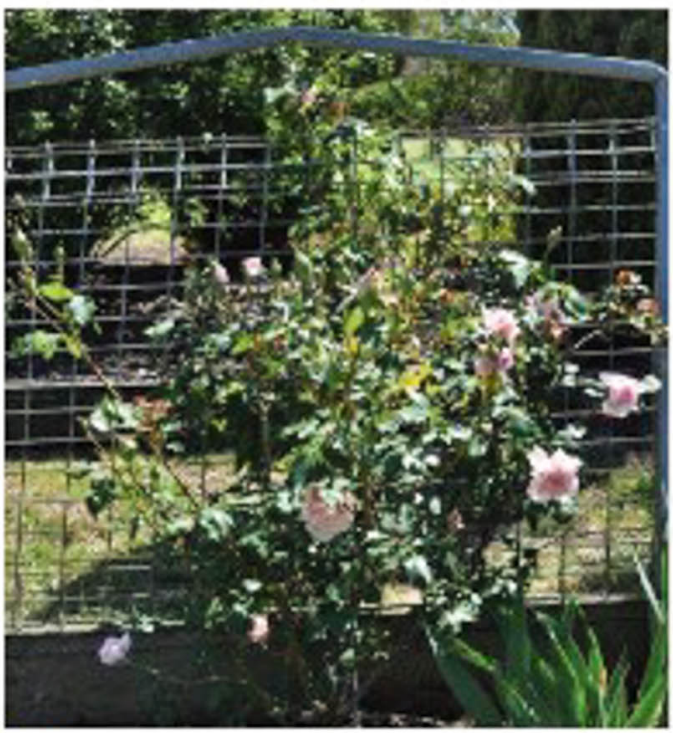


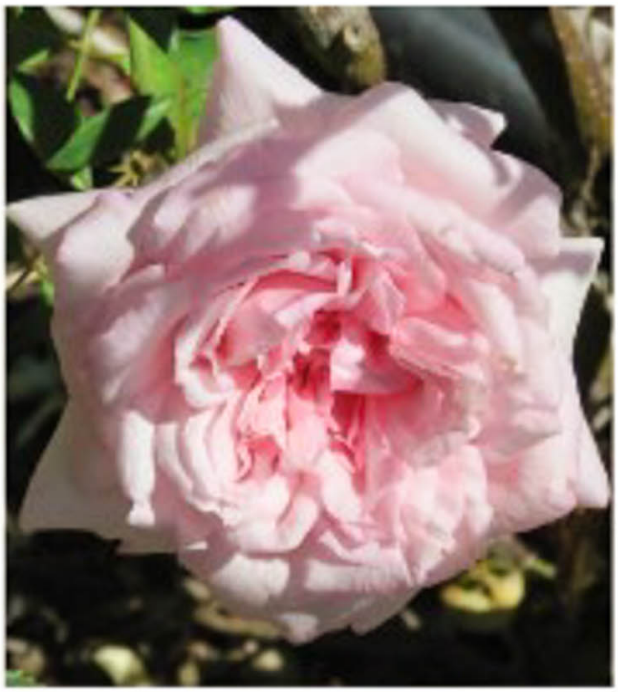
"Jane Hocy"

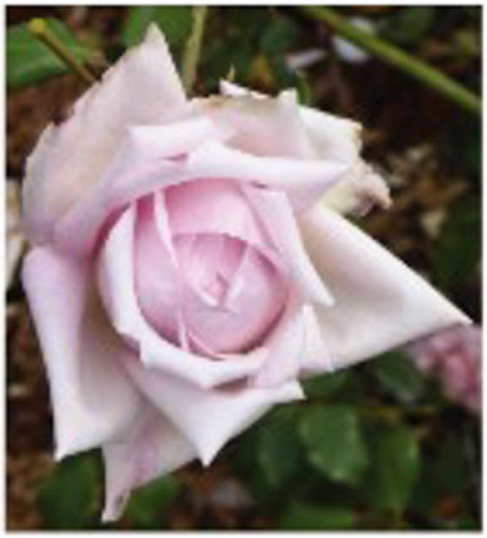


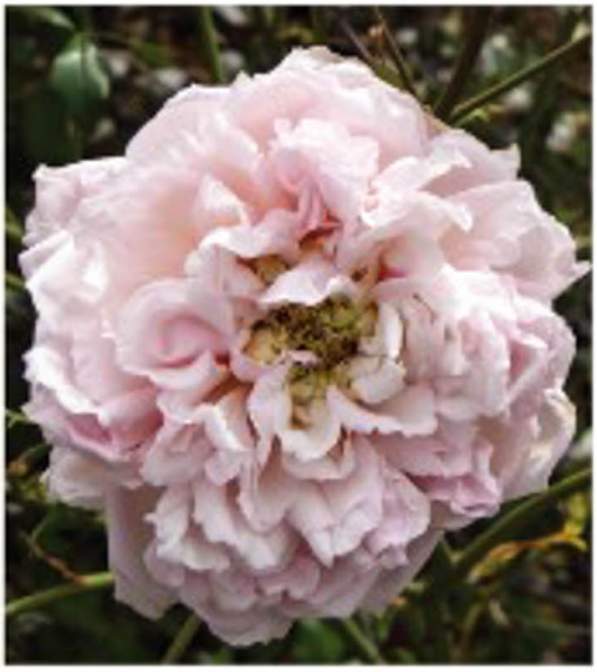
Originally from a farm near Allora, south of Toowoomba, Queensland. It was named for the lady of the house.

The flowers are double to very double, solitary or in clusters. They are often Malmaison pink and slightly darker in the centre, but can be paler, grey-pink or cream-pink. The centre can be covered by in-folded petals, or hard green (which may be a form of proliferation). At times the guard petals reflex. Flowers can ball in wet weather.
Light Tea scent.
The receptacle base and pedicel are glandular.
No mature hips observed.
The prickles age from red to grey. Watershoots can be well-armed or nearly prickle-free.
The leaflets are glossy and can be wavy-edged.
The bush growth is upright.
We don't yet have access to a mature plant.

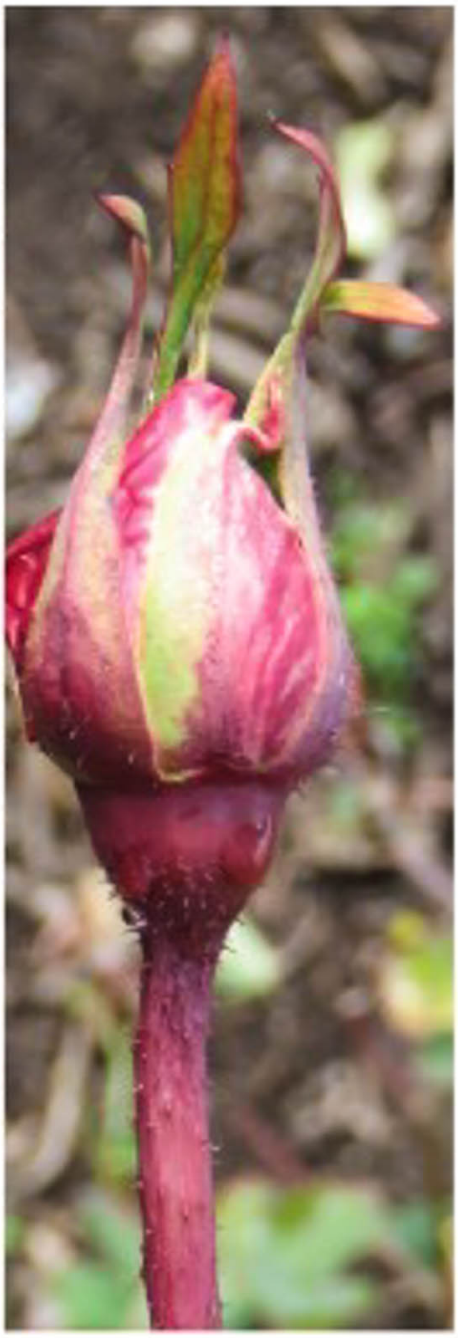






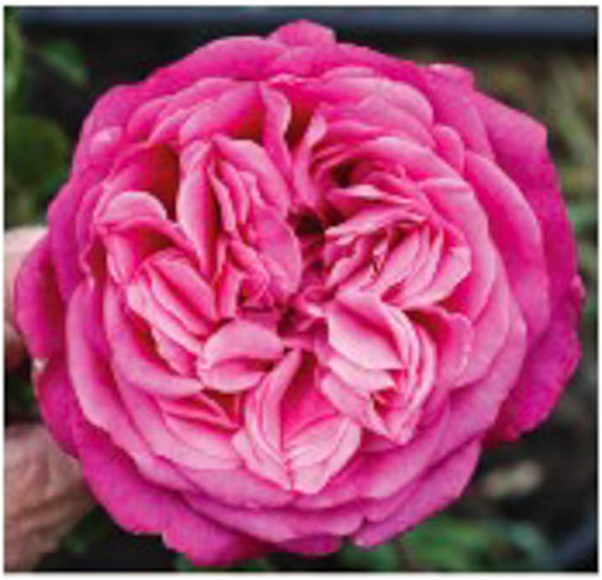


"Kombacy Elyena"

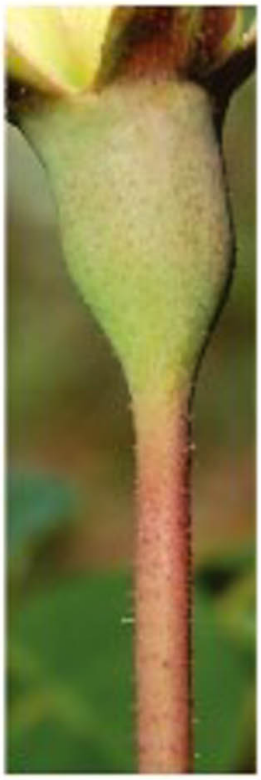


Collected in Victoria, from a house built in 1903 near Mildura (the photos are of this clone); also from the Melbourne General Cemetery. Syn. "**Mary Ann Murray**" and "**Stephi's Red**" (Rookwood, on several graves) in NSW; "**Joanna**" and probably "**Rockton Red**" in Queensland; "**Ferguson Valley C**" in WA.
It was bought long ago in Queensland labelled as 'Souvenir de Thérèse Levet'.

Buds can be markedly swan-necked. Blooms are often nodding, double to very double, and can ball or proliferate. They can be red, amaranth or pink shades. Petals usually have a silvery reverse, and a creamy-white nub to the base. It flowers in flushes, including through winter in warm areas.
It has a raspberry confectionery scent, not pleasant to all; but it is the only rose a woman who had lost her sense of smell could detect, and to her it was sweet.
The receptacle base and the pedicel are glandular.
No mature hips observed.
The new growth and prickles are red-brown.
The leaflets are broad - sometimes almost circular, but this is often not readily apparent because they tend to fold up from the mid-rib. They have prominent veins that are often conspicuously impressed, and moderately coarse serrations.
Arching growth, to about 2.1m high.



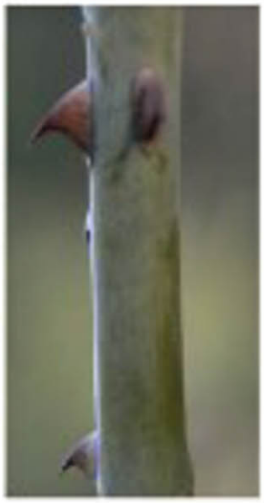
"Kombacy Marianne"



Collected near Mildura, Victoria.

Probably '**Mme de Watteville**' (Guillot fils 1883). There is no 'gold standard' plant with which to compare it. However, it fits well with early descriptions and detailed paintings and photographs, and matches plants of unknown provenance labelled 'Mme de Watteville' in some major European collections.

Flowers are double, with creamy-white petals, occasionally light yellow, edged with pink which is variable in extent and intensity. They appear high-centred at first, sometimes with angel-wing guard petals, then cupped, and can open flat. The centre is often covered by pads of petals. Flowers are most often borne singly but a watershoot may carry a candelabrum. They are readily damaged by adverse weather. It flowers in flushes, including through winter in warm areas.



The fragrance ranges from minimal to moderate; complex, slightly fruity Tea, sweet and dry notes.

Receptacles have glands all over, and a sandpaper feel as they age. They can have a whitish bloom. The pedicels are glandular.

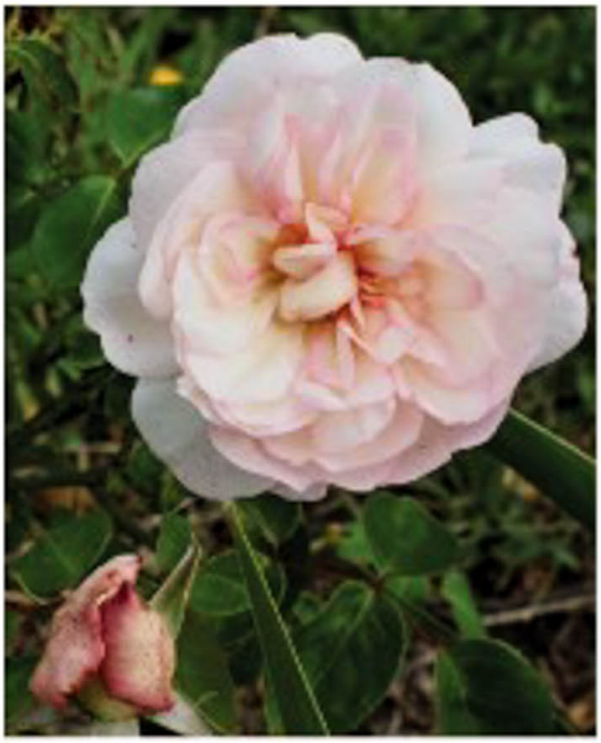
Functional reproductive parts are rare or are covered with pads of unopened petals. No mature hips observed.

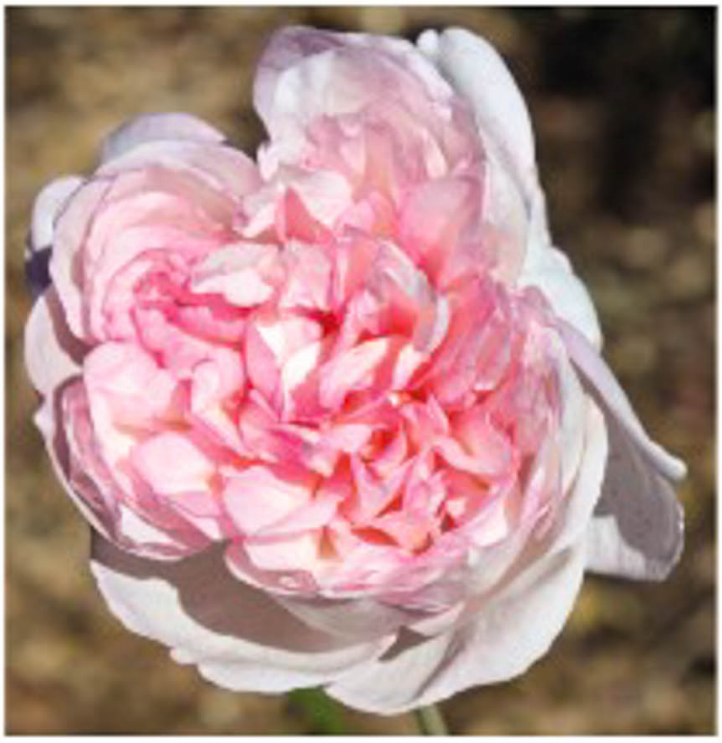
The prickles are red when new, and broaden with age on main canes. Pairs of prickles are common below leaf nodes.

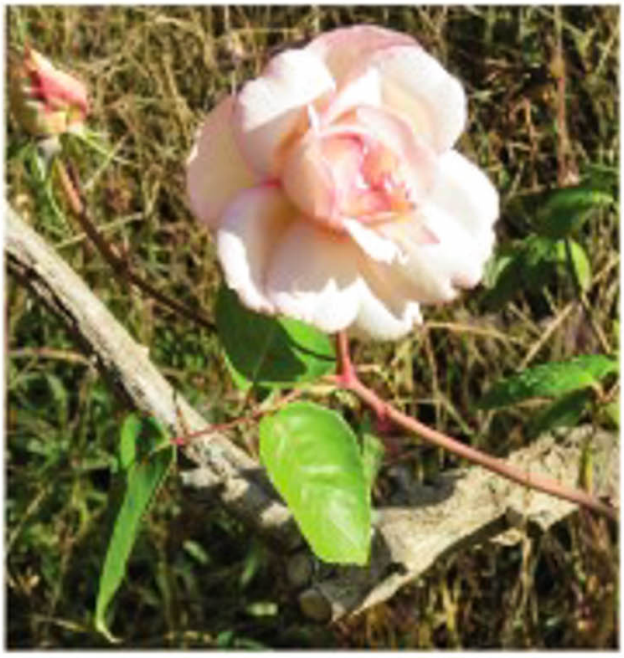
Leaflets are light to mid green, glossy when new, elliptical pointed at first, and age broader to rounded oval.

It has a twiggy habit, and the main trunks can become gaunt.

Modest height.







Above, 12-year-old plant.
Left, parent plant, may be very old.

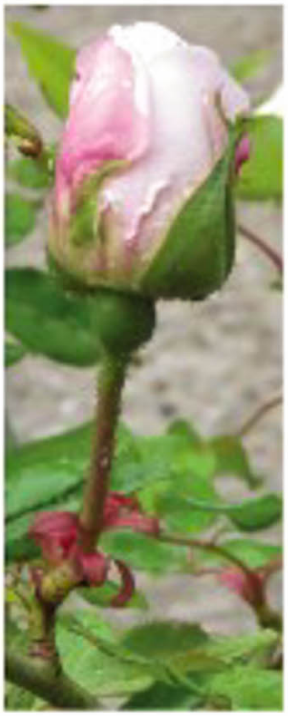
"Stiff Lady Roberts"

Syn. **"NZ Lady Roberts"**. It was imported from New Zealand as 'Lady Roberts', and is in commerce as such.

Flowers are double to very double. Petal colour varies with the season, and flowers are sometimes blotched or veined in a darker colour. Petal edges roll outwards and can form points.
Stamens can be visible when the flower is fully open.
The scent becomes unpleasant as the flower ages.
The receptacles are variable in shape, and are smooth.
The pedicel has a few glands.
The prickles are sparse and variably hooked.
New growth is burgundy, and the foliage is quite variable.
The plant is low-growing and spreading.

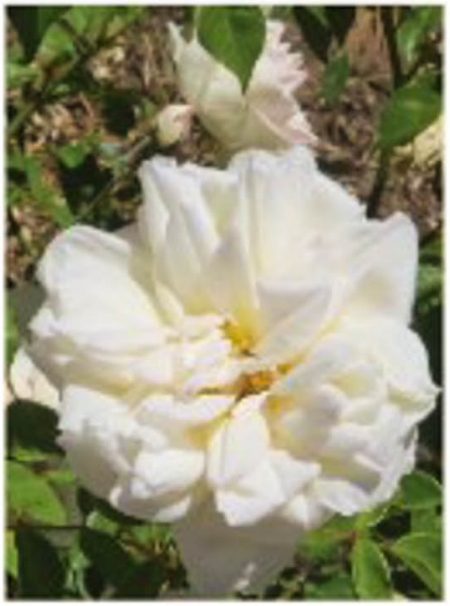
It is similar in many ways to 'Anna Olivier' / 'Lady Roberts', but is much less vigorous; DNA comparison is pending, to determine whether it is a sport of 'Anna Olivier'. It might be a seedling.
Another of the possibilities discussed is 'Souvenir of Stella Gray' (Dickson 1907).

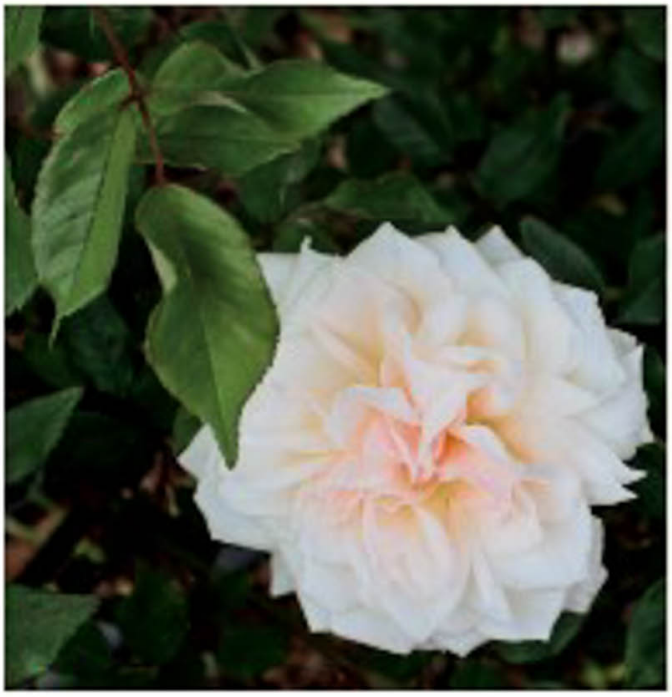
"Molesworth Yellow China-Tea"

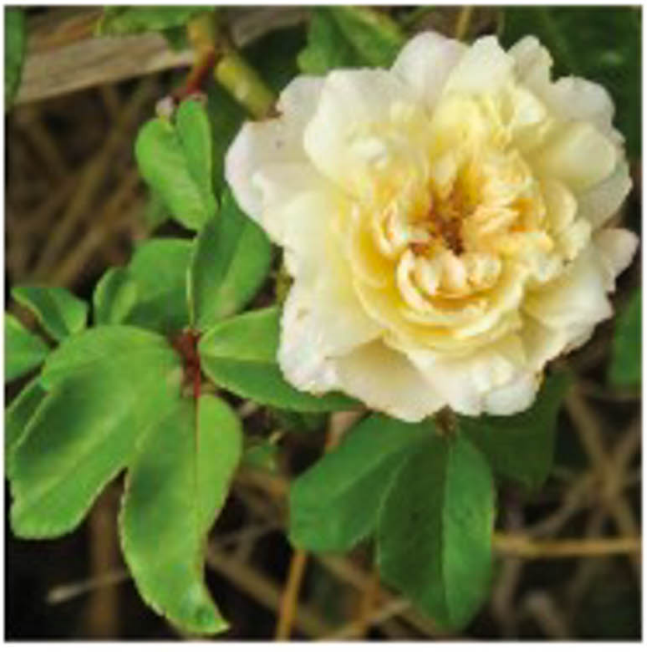


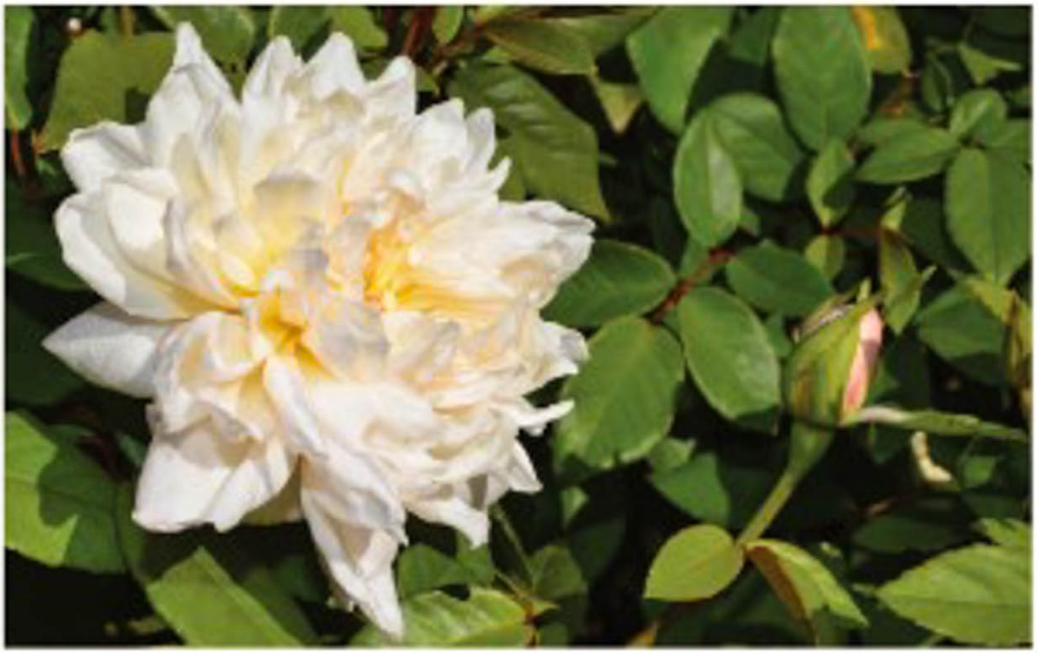
Collected in Victoria from a farm garden with a wealth of cottage plants, like many old gardens in areas of good rainfall.

The flowers are small and double to very double. They are rarely as yellow as the bottom right photo; more commonly cream, sometimes with a pink tinge. Often carmine -spotted or -shaded on the guard petals. Flowers can be quilled. They are usually borne singly, and repeat well in good conditions.
Fragrant, at times strongly.
The receptacles are variable in shape, and have stalked glands at the base.
The pedicel has stalked glands.
It sets small hips if left untrimmed.
The prickles are long, and are mainly on old wood.
The leaflets are glossy, and have conspicuous impressed veins.
It makes a low spreading bush.









"Mr Williams' Gloire de Dijon"

Collected from several old gardens in WA.

Probably **'Élie Beauvilain'** (Beauvilain 1887. Some Noisette ancestry.)
The same as the rose grown overseas under that name. No recorded offspring.

The flowers are double to very double, most commonly mid-pink but can vary to buff. Petals can have a yellow nub, sometimes a white stripe. At times the petal reverses are darker. It flowers in flushes and in winter.
Sweet Tea scent.
The receptacle and pedicel are smooth.
It sets a few hips, but seeds are very rare.
Leaflets are broad.
Moderate climber, spreading and arching.

"Mrs Goode's Special Tea"

Collected in an Adelaide suburb in 2000. Also said to have been in the Melbourne General Cemetery.

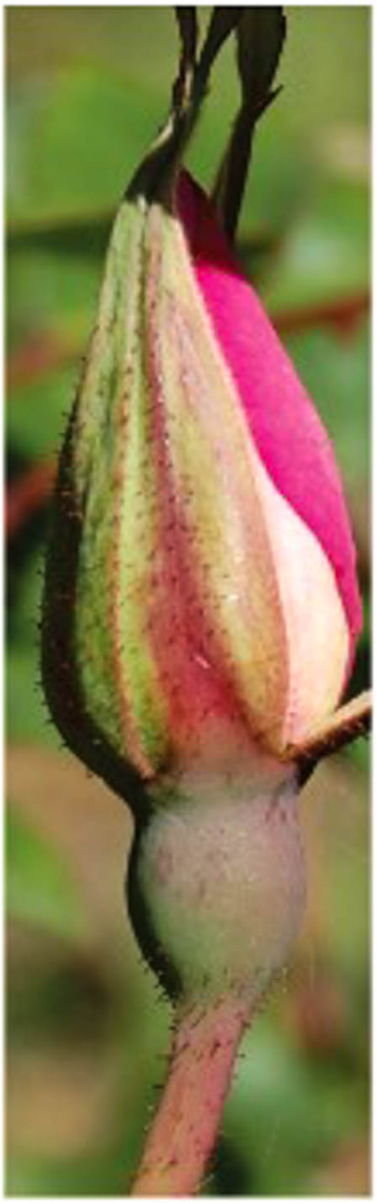
Almost certainly '**Marquise de Vivens**' (Dubreuil 1885): a rare example of a Tea with precise early descriptions and sufficiently specific features to be reasonably confident of a name.

Blooms are usually barely double. The petals have pale reverses and bases, and pink tips which roll back at the sides. The brightness of the pink colour is variable. Flowers are mostly borne singly. Flowering can be prolific even when the bush is affected by mildew. Its winter flowering is good in warm areas.

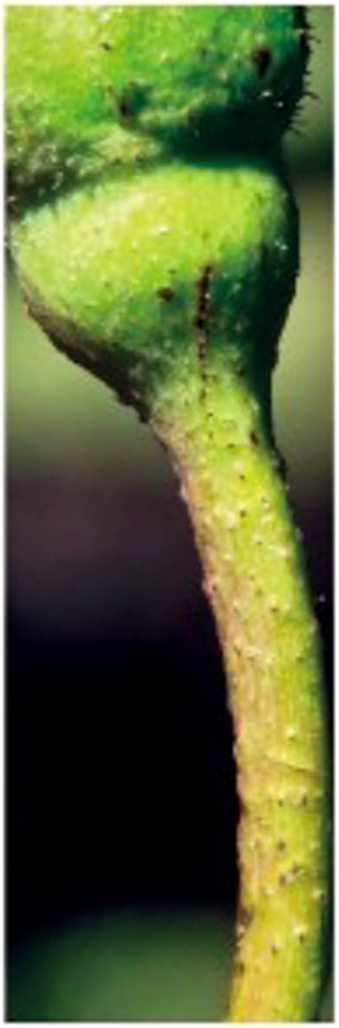
Consistent violet scent.

The receptacle base and pedicel are glandular. There are very few prickles.

The parent bush, thought to be 100 years old, had covered a large area by layering itself, and was 1.7m high.



"Mrs Heggie's Red Tea"



Collected in the Barossa Valley, SA, from a vineyard fenceline, planted before 1920.

Almost certainly **'Beauté Inconstante'** (Ducher 1887; some Noisette ancestry). In commerce incorrectly as 'Papillon'.

Flowers are usually double. The colour darkens with the season and with exposure to sunlight. (Photo at bottom of page, early spring.) Blooms are most often red, with an occasional white stripe.
It has a light to strong Tea scent, with occasional sweet pea or raspberry notes.
The pedicel and sepals have stalked and sessile glands that can extend onto the receptacle, sometimes covering it entirely, sometimes leaving a smooth central band.

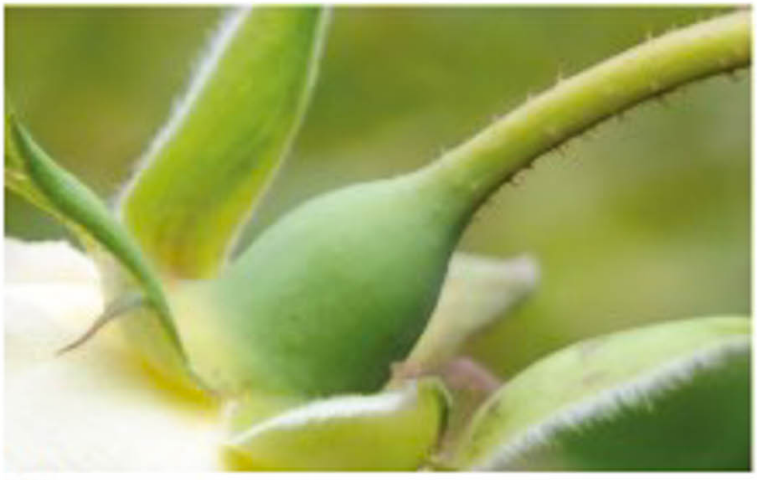
It sets many hips if left untrimmed.
The prickles age from red to grey, and can be paired.
It is tall and spreads widely: very large bush.
Healthy. Not attractive to aphids.

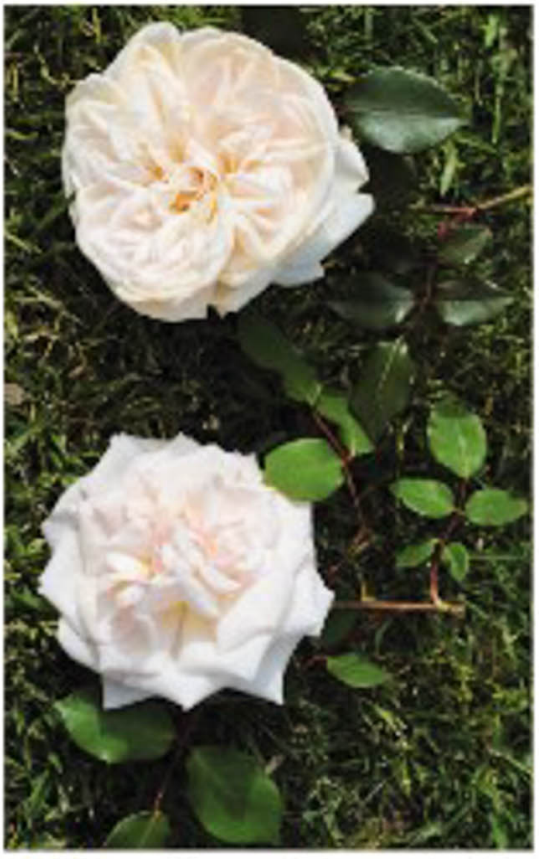
"Mystery Cream Tea"

Collected from multiple sites in Victoria and SA, with several study names including **"Range View Pink Tea"**.
It has similarities to 'Devoniensis'.
It has been sold incorrrectly as 'Niphetos'.

The flowers occur singly or in clusters, and nod their heads. They are double to very double. They can have a pink tinge; can be light yellow or green at the base. The petals are notched, and the outer ones have a rolled edge. (See also photograph on back cover.) The stamens can be just visible in fully open blooms.
The blooms have a sharp, sweet Tea fragrance at first.
The pedicel has stalked glands and prickles, and can be flattened on one side.
Well armed on new and old growth, with prickles extending up to the base of the pedicel.
Medium height, spreading, twiggy.

Possibilities discussed include 'Belle Emilie' (pre 1829), which has no descendants listed on www.helpmefind.com.





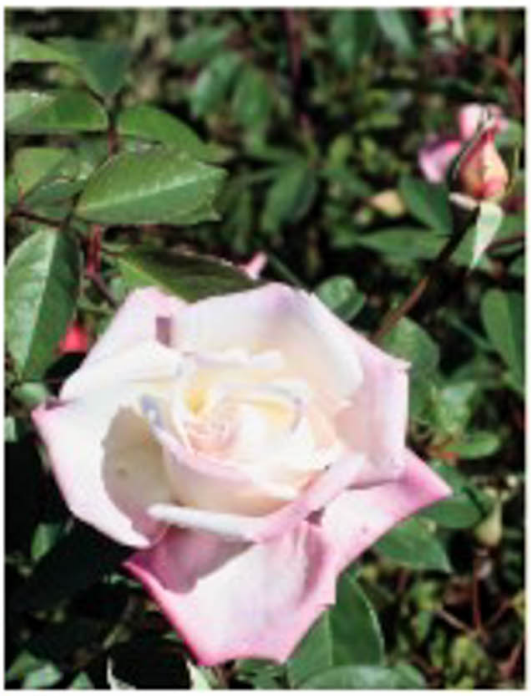
Δ Upper bloom, 'Devoniensis'. All other photos are of "Range View Pink Tea".

"Nantawarra Pink Tea"

Collected from beside a well in mid-north SA. Syn. **"Hay Valley"**, **"NRC Love"** (SA), **"Chateau Yering Tea"** (Vic).

Almost certainly **'Auguste Comte'** (Soupert & Notting 1895). It is in commerce incorrectly as 'Mme Hoste'.

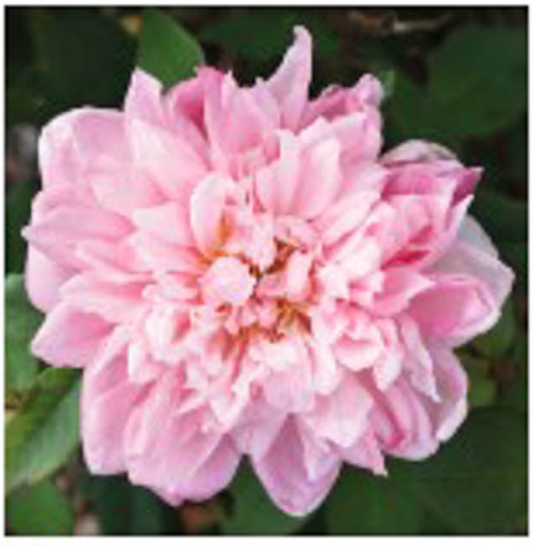
The flowers are double to very double, and are initially high-centred. They are cream or pink in the centre, darkening to red with exposure to sunlight. They can be swan-necked. Some flowers are held high in sprays above the bush. It sometimes proliferates.
Minimal to moderate sweet to dry Tea scent.
The pedicels are variable, with some having very few glands.
It can set hips but we have not found viable seeds.
The prickles are variable in number, with some canes being moderately prickly and others prickle-free.
The leaflets are elongated and leathery.
Spreading bush, eventually tall. Healthy.



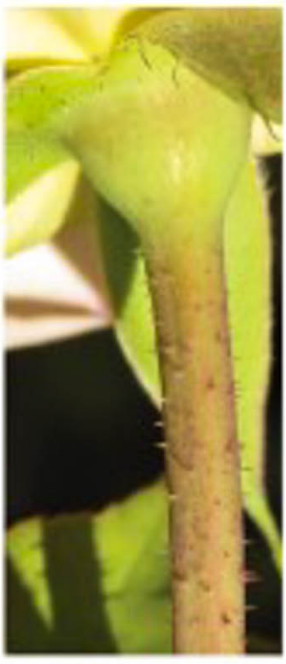
"Octavus Weld"

Collected in the Adelaide Hills, SA, from a 1901 grave; syn. "**The Gill Rose**" and "**North Dandalup Rose**" (WA). The same as "**Angel's Camp Tea**" (California).
It has been sold as 'Rubens'.

"Octavus Weld" is one of the most variable of Teas. (See also the title page.)
Identifying features include the bead-like receptacle - spherical or slightly elongated; and the tendency to set many hips.
Constant flowering. It lasts well as a cut flower.
Blooms can be quilled. The stamens can be visible when the flower is fully open.
The scent is a changing mixture of sweet, fruity and spicy.
The pedicel has very few glands.
The leaflets resemble the foliage of China roses, being elongated and relatively small.
The bush form is variable: like many Teas it can be very tall as needed to reach the light.
It is superb in winter in frost-free areas.



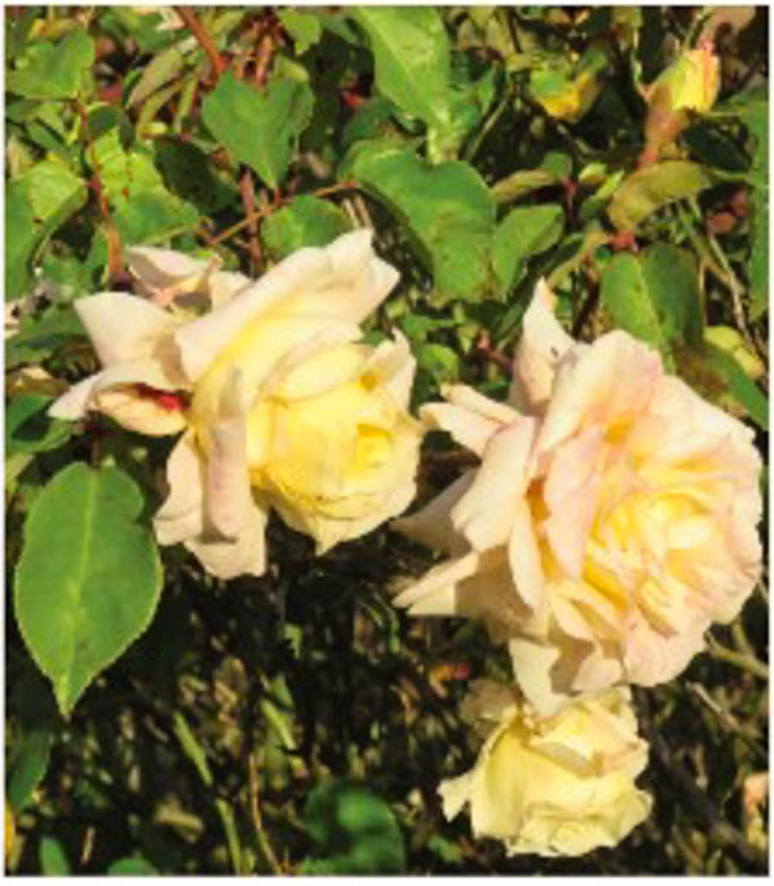
"Old Blythewood Yellow Tea"



Collected from a National Trust property in Pinjarra, WA. Syn. **"ABC Howard's Quarry Yellow"** and **"Nantawarra Cream Tea"** in SA, **"Fawkner Ochre Tea"** in Victoria, **"Fowler Tea"** in WA.

Almost certainly **'Souvenir de Pierre Notting'** (Soupert & Notting 1895; some Noisette ancestry), which has descendants from assisted pollination.
It has been circulated incorrectly as 'Georges Schwartz'.

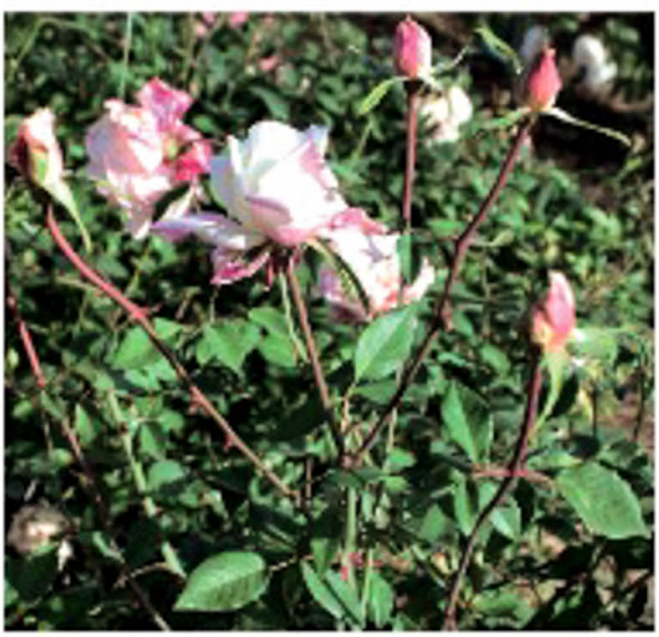
Flowers are double to very double, can be quartered. The colour of the flowers and of the new growth varies with the season. Petals can be veined or tipped with carmine. Blooms are readily damaged by adverse weather. Balling can occur in spring.
It has a moderate to strong dry Tea scent.
Receptacles vary in shape.
The pedicel has stalked glands and some prickles, and can be grooved.
No mature hips observed.
Very few prickles.
Leaflets are elongated.
Tall eventually, spreading.

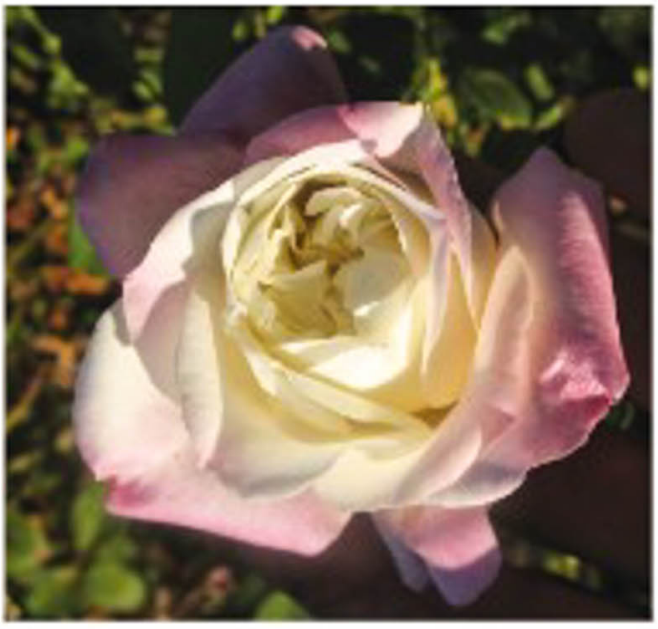


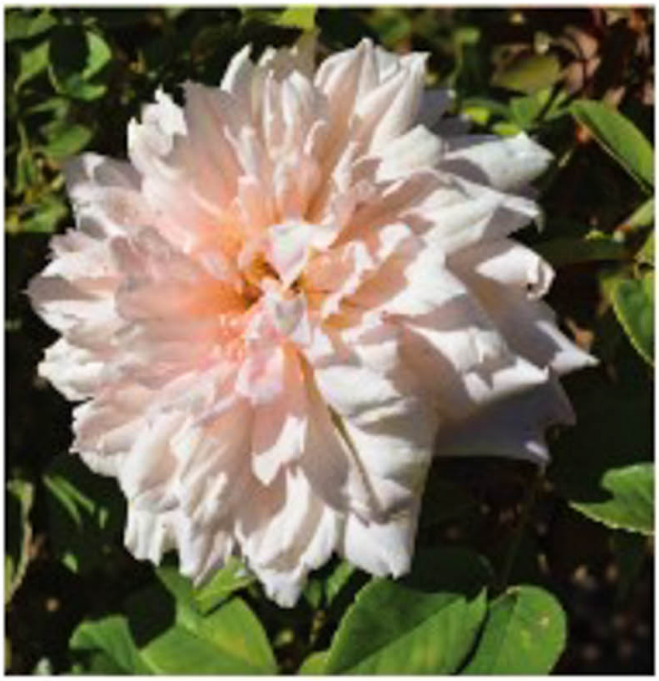
"Peace's Perfect White"

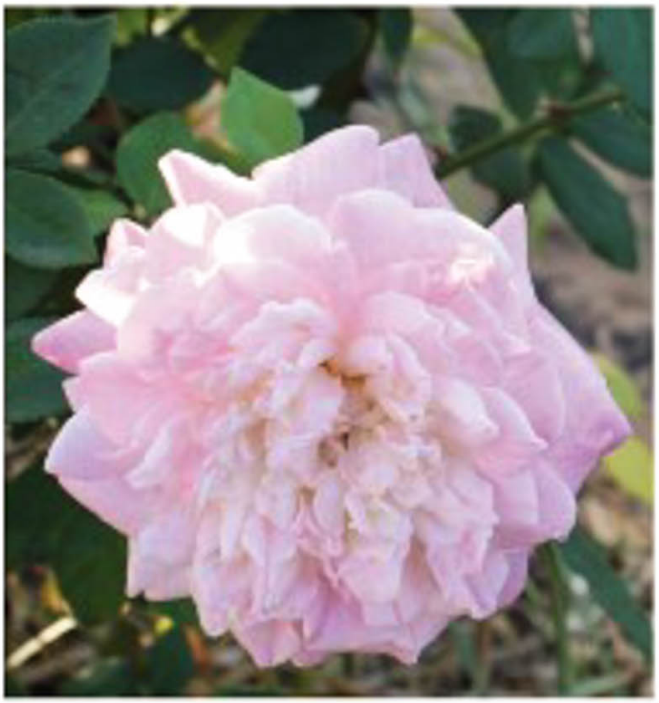
Collected at Melbourne General Cemetery: also from three sites at Rookwood, as **"William Anderson"**, **"Alice Emma Hanks"** and **"Matthew Smith"**.
It has similarities to 'White Maman Cochet'. DNA comparison is pending, to confirm that it is a different rose.

Petals can have a green nub in the bud stage. Buds are white, usually with pink tinges on the guard petals. Flowers can age pink, or apricot-pink, even mid-pink in autumn. Outer petals can have red spots or streaks from weather damage. Flowers are double to very double, and can be quilled. They occur singly or in clusters. They can develop a hard green centre, probably proliferative. They can ball.
Receptacles vary in shape, are sometimes asymmetrical, and can have a whitish bloom. The receptacle and pedicel are smooth. The pedicel can be grooved.
No mature hips observed.
Leaflets are long and leathery.
It is well-armed on new and old wood; prickles can be paired.
Moderate height, upright.

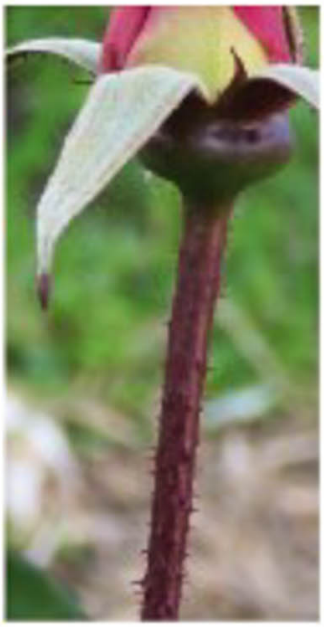






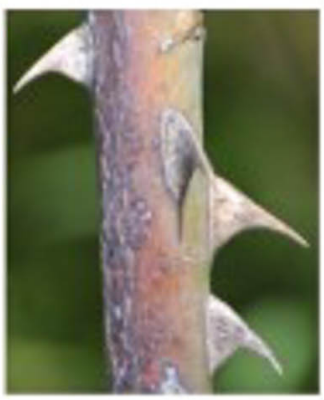


"Not Princesse de Sagan"

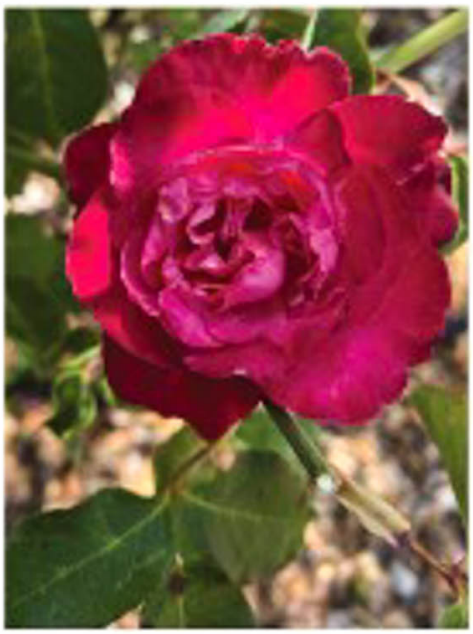


An old plant grows in Melbourne General Cemetery, Victoria, as did "Kombacy Elyena" (p. 36): both were called "Robert's Red Tea" in the 1980s, before the finder recognised that they were different.

Almost certainly **'Professeur Ganiviat'** (Perrier 1890).
It is in commerce incorrectly as 'Princesse de Sagan' (also in Europe and the USA).



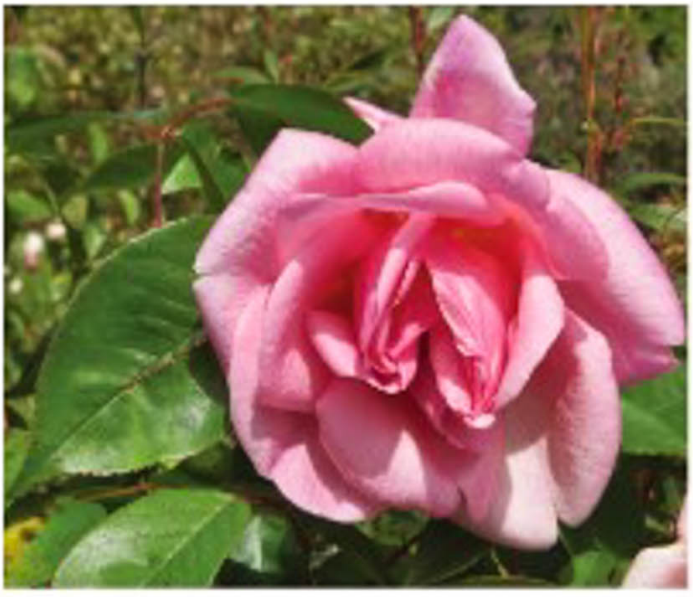
The buds are useful in flower arrangements. The flowers are small. They don't open out flat. The colour is amaranth, usually with a silvery reverse. There may be a white or yellow nub to the petals. The flowers can ball in wet weather.
It has a variable Tea fragrance, which can be strong, with the raspberry confectionery element often found with roses close to the China heritage. Sometimes it is pure; at times it has other notes, eg. mothballs.
The receptacle shape is variable.
The pedicel has stalked glands and some prickles.
No mature hips observed.
Prickles are red on new growth, and can be paired.
The leaflets have a leaden cast, and are often folded up from the midrib.
Tall bush, will climb with support.



"Rose Hedge Cottage Pink"

Syn. **"Mrs Val Nash"**, **"Marie's Pink Tea"**. Collected in WA in several locations.

Constant flowering. The blooms can be solitary or in clusters. Different coloured flowers may be produced at the same time, from deep pink to almost white. Petals of paler blooms can have a basal port-wine stain. The flowers are often barely double, but the petal count can increase to the extent of quartering, and the form varies. The edges of outer petals roll outwards. Flowers can ball in wet weather.
There is a strong sharp sweet Tea scent, with spicy notes.
The receptacle is variably glandular.
The pedicel has many glands and occasional fine prickles.
Prickles are plentiful and wide-based.
Bush width is 2 - 6m depending on growing conditions.
It is tall-growing, and can make a very large bush overall.

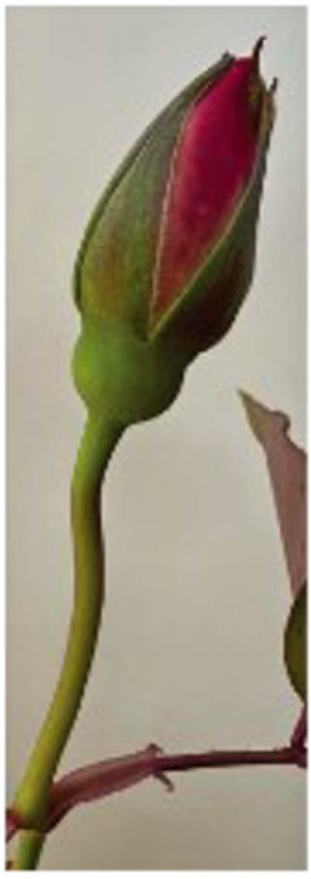


"Not Souvenir d'un Ami"

Imported from New Zealand as 'Souvenir d'un Ami', and is in commerce under that name.

It is very variable in flower colour, from pale buff to apricot to mid-pink to coral and carmine, with a yellow base. The colour varies with the weather and there may be a range of colours on the bush at the same time. Summer flowers are darker, fewer-petalled and looser in form. Flowers are double to very double.
It has a strong sweet Tea scent with floral and fruity notes: one of the most fragrant Teas.
The receptacle has occasional glands, and the pedicel is usually smooth.
The leaflets turn upwards from the midrib. One of the features that sets this rose apart is the port-wine colour of the undersides of the leaflets, that can persist in the mature foliage.
Another is the unusual pear-like shape of the hips.
The growth is tall, upright, angular; with support, it will make a small climber.

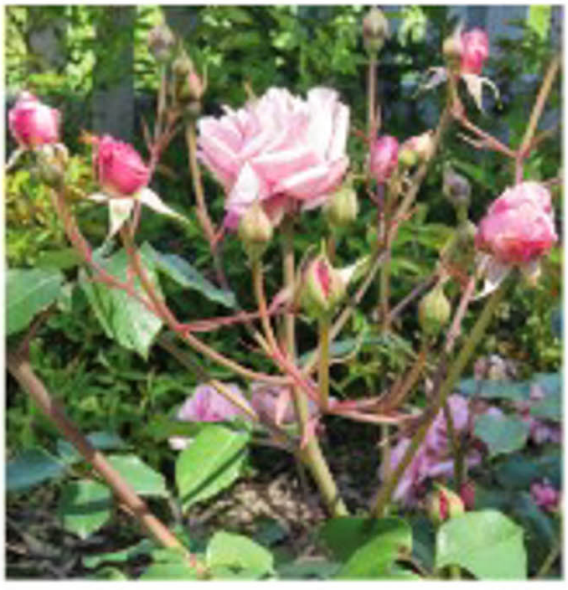
The same rose is grown in the USA as "Huntingdon Mme de Tartas" and "Rose sold as Général Tartas".



"Sylvia Hannah's Dark Pink Tea"

Collected northern NSW: also as **"Molly (Skennar) Mills"**. Syn. **"Blackbutt Tea"**, collected from north of Toowoomba, Queensland.

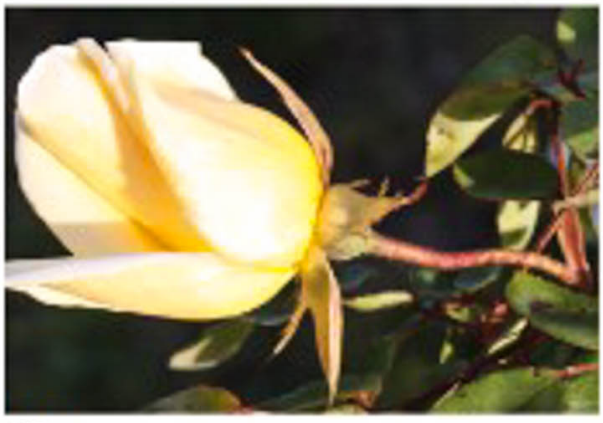
The flower colour varies with the season, as does the petal number. Blooms can be quartered. The petals can be darker on the reverse: they have a white or yellow nub, with an occasional white stripe. Petal edges roll outwards. The stamens can be just visible when the flower is fully open. Proliferation can occur.
It blooms in flushes but usually has some flowers.
Moderate scent; sweet rose, faint citrus or fruity undertones.
Receptacles vary in shape. The receptacle base and pedicel have stalked glands.
Most hips don't persist; there is an occasional seed.
It is well armed, with prickles distributed right up to the pedicel, and fine prickles on the pedicel.
The leaflets are broad.
Growth is tall. It can be a small climber with support.



"Vestey's Yellow"

Collected from 'Coombe Cottage', Victoria, home of soprano and keen gardener Dame Nellie Melba, and later of her grand-daughter Lady Vestey.
Syn. "**Mulvay Rose**" (WA) and "**Dr Russell's Yellow**" (Adelaide Hills, SA: photos are of that clone unless otherwise stated). Tea or HT-Tea.

Flowers are informal, with the petal count varying from 10 to 30. The colour is variable ochre-yellow, with petals fading at the edges as the bloom opens, to near-white. It flowers throughout the year in warm areas and is prolific, making a cheerful display. Flowers are borne singly or in small clusters.
Light, sweet Tea fragrance.
The pedicel has stalked glands, and many fine prickles towards its base.
Hips ripen through yellow to orange.
Well-armed with straight or hooked prickles.
The growth is upright and vigorous, to about 1.8m with light pruning.

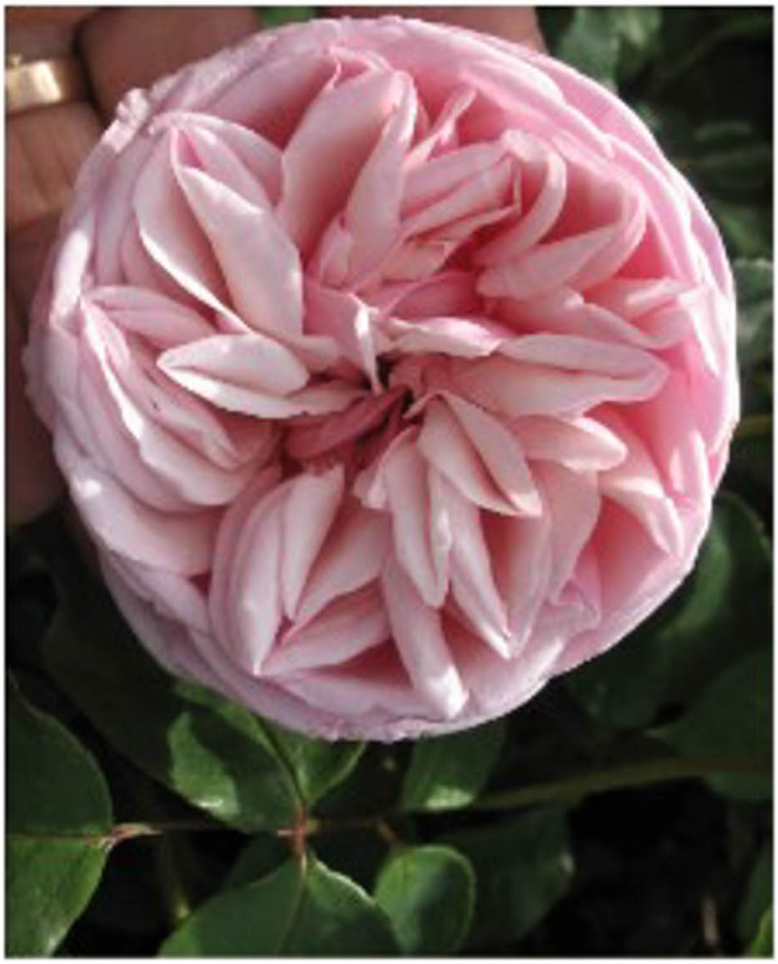


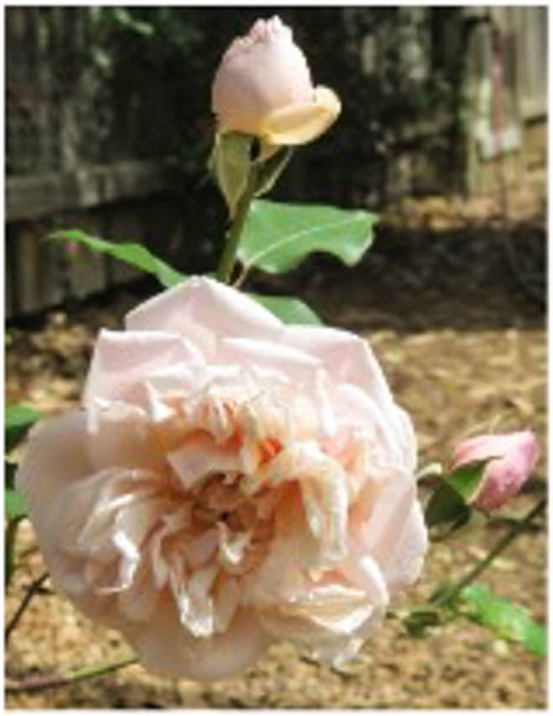
Below, "Vestey's Yellow" (left) and "Dr Russell's Yellow", young plants.

"William James Wright"

Collected at Rookwood from a 1937 grave.
It was considered by its finder to be the best of the Rookwood unknown Teas.

It is also the best-armed.
It has soft pink petals, which can be darker on the reverse with a yellow nub, and roll to form points. Rarely, blooms are soft apricot, or even creamy-white with pink on the guard petals. The flowers are usually very double, sometimes nodding, and can be high-centred at first. Sometimes cupped. There can be central pads of in-folded petals.
The reproductive elements are very rarely visible. Small hips can form but we have not seen viable seeds.
It has a light to medium sweet fragrance.
Receptacles can have a whitish bloom.
The pedicel has sparse stalked glands.
The prickles age to grey.
Leaflets are glossy, and can have undulating edges.
Medium height, spreading growth.

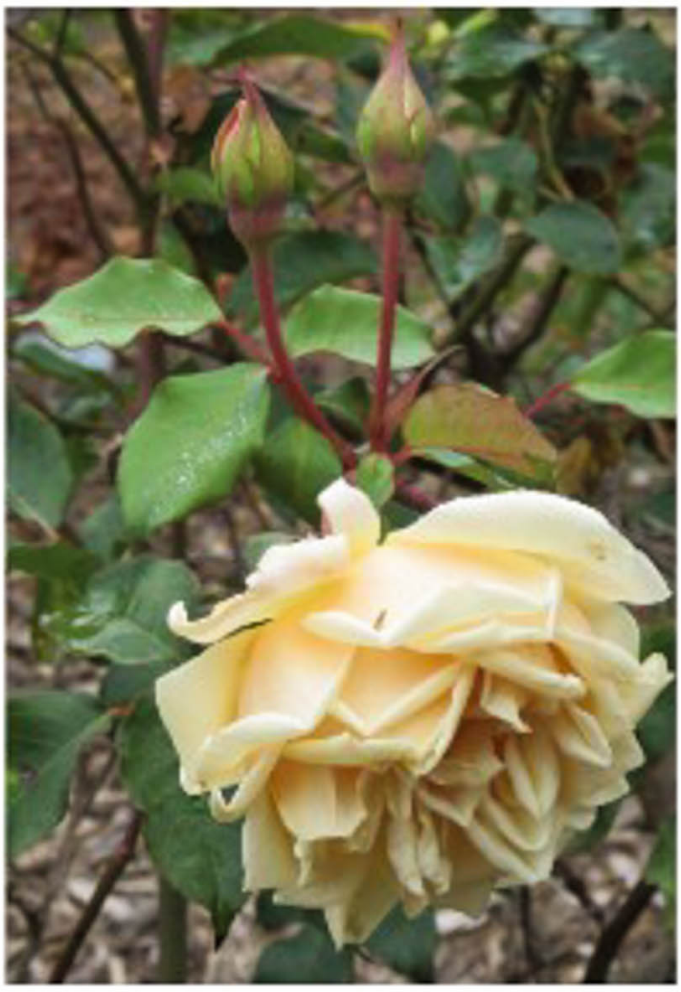




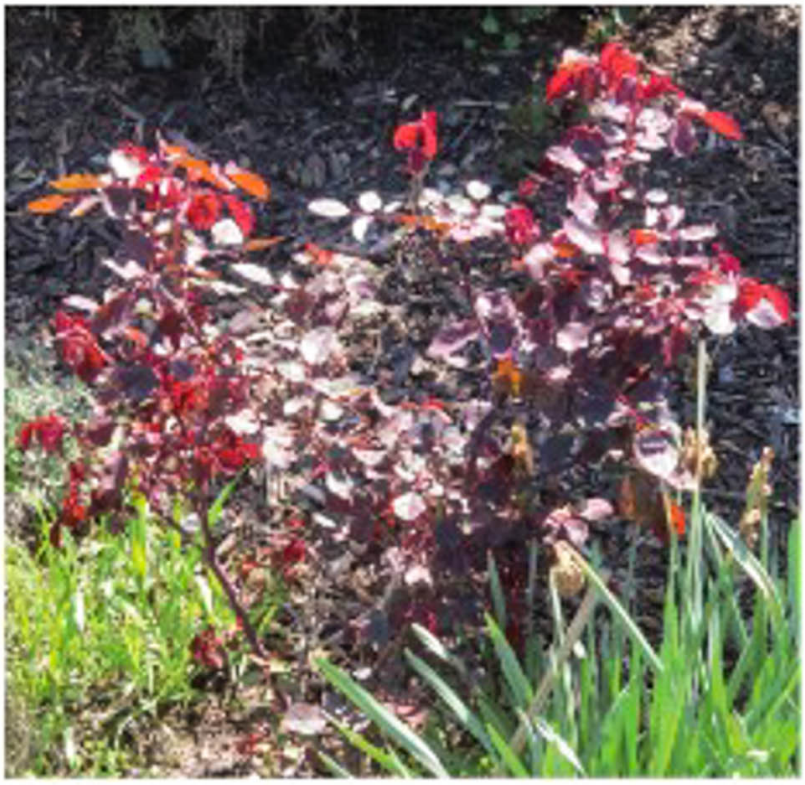
"Wood St Buff Yellow"

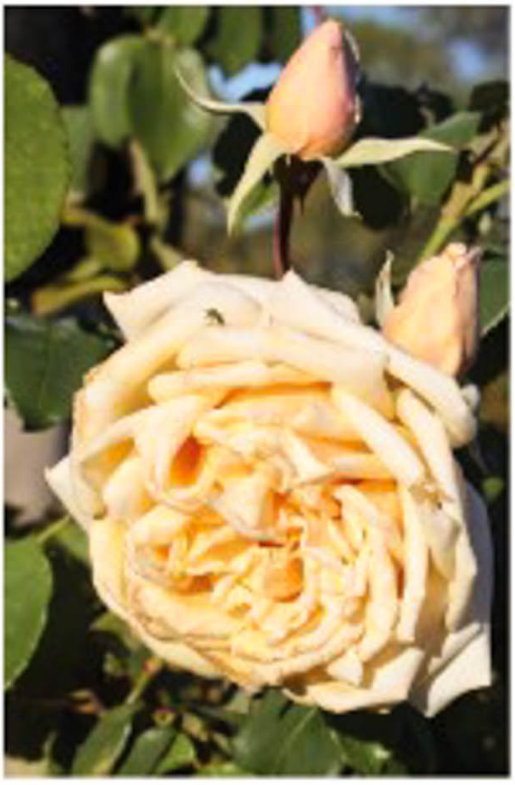
From a farm near Balingup, WA.

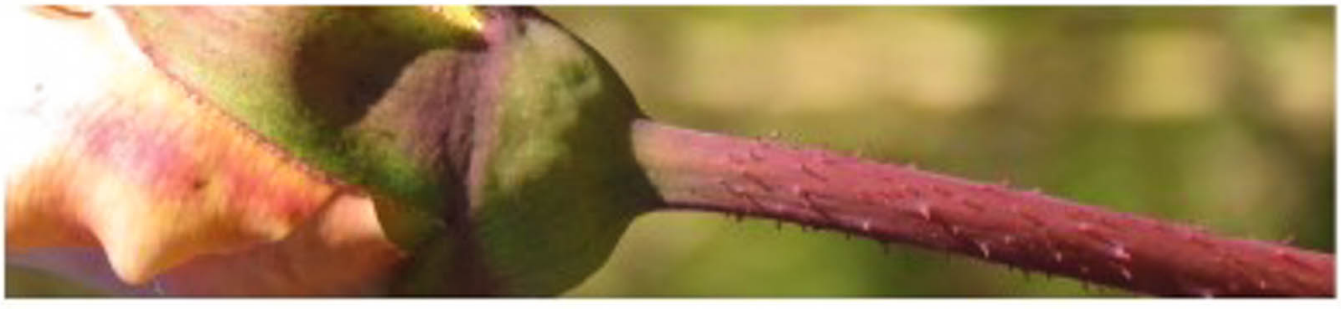
It has similarities to "Fake Perle" (p. 28) but the flushes of bloom occur at different times, it appears to be less vigorous, and the new growth is darker in colour - a striking deep burgundy.
The flowers are very double. Petals can have a slight pink tinge on the reverse. The flower colour ages to yellow after picking.
Strong floral Tea scent with spicy notes.
The receptacle can be finely pimpled.
The pedicel has stalked glands and prickles, and can be grooved.
No mature hips observed.
Prickles vary from sparse to moderate, and can be straight or hooked.
The leaflets can be wavy-edged.
Medium-sized spreading bush. Healthy.



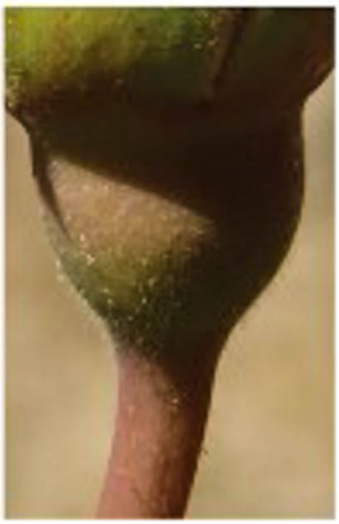
Left, top, "Wood St Buff Yellow". Lower, "Fake Perle".





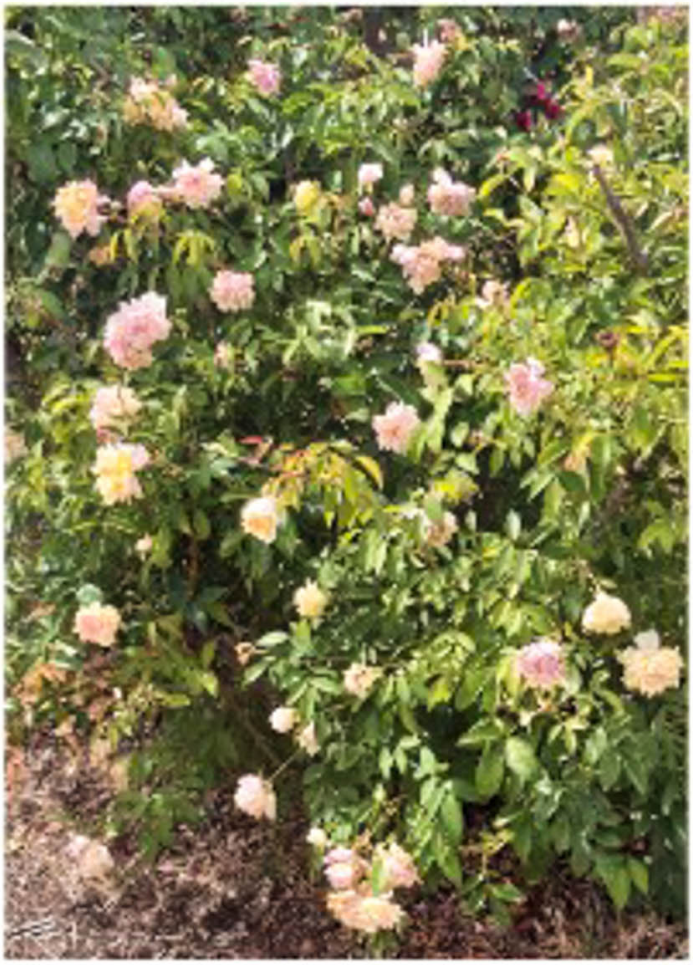


"Yallum Park Yellow"



Collected in south-east South Australia. The original bushes (photo below) may have been planted in time for the visit of two of Queen Victoria's young sons in 1881.

The flowers are double to very double, and can have a pink tinge. There can be a green nub to the petals in the bud. Flowers can have red spots on the outer petals, perhaps reflecting spraying or rain. They occur singly or in clusters. The stamens can be visible when the flower is fully open. The blooms have a light Tea scent. All of the receptacle is glandular, as is the pedicel. It sets few hips. Well-armed, mainly on old wood. The prickles age from red to grey. The leaflets are long and narrow. Medium to tall, spreading, arching.



"Bunya Mountains" Noisette

Collected in Queensland.

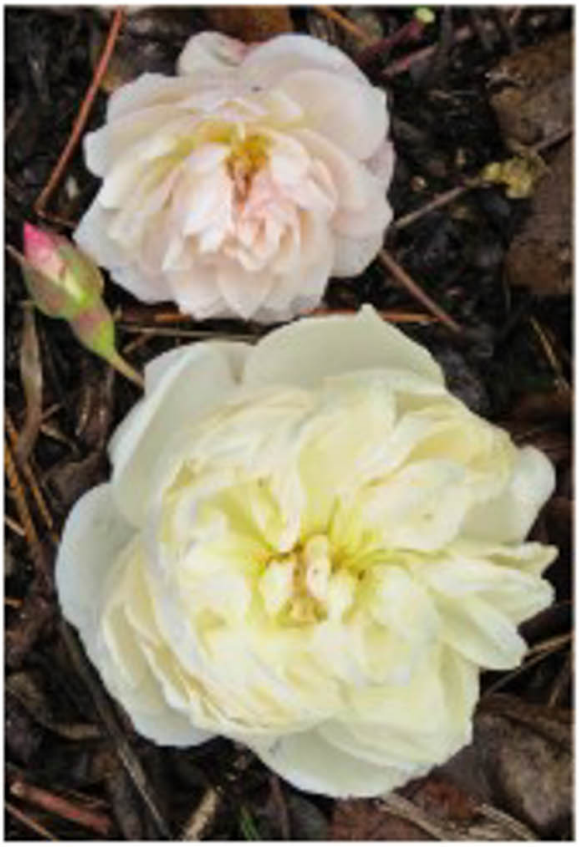
Essentially it is a white rose; buds and flower centres can briefly be palest pink.

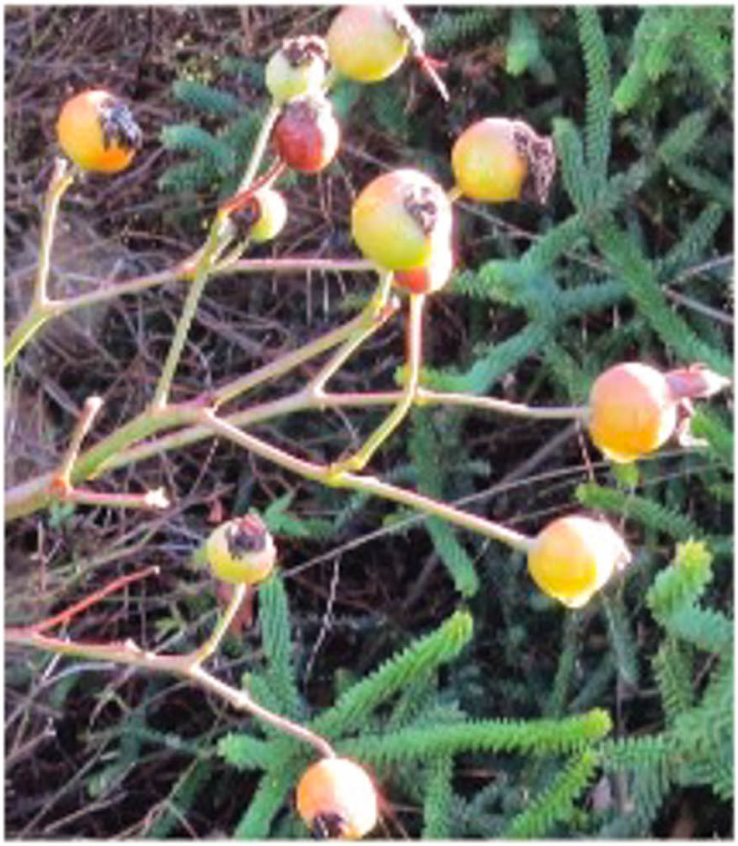
Blooms have good substance for floristry. Guard petals can have red flashes. It blooms in flushes but usually has some flowers.
Light scent.
The pedicel has stalked glands.
It sets hips, with few seeds.
Well-armed on old wood. Prickles are red on new wood.
Modest arching shrub-climber.
Healthy.

"Yallum Park Cream" Noisette

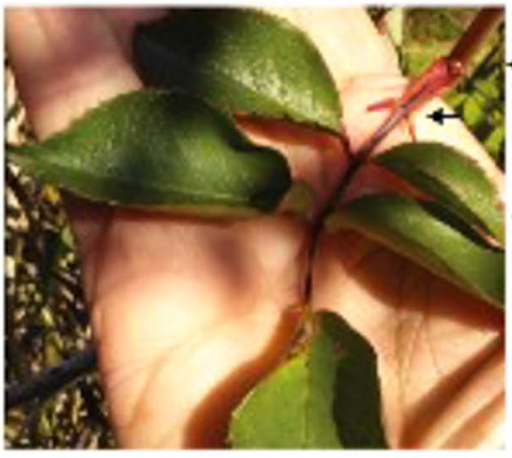
Collected in south-east SA.

Flowers are double, cream with a light yellow centre, sometimes with a transient pink or peach tinge. They can be green at the petal base in the bud. They occur in clusters at the end of, or on sideshoots from, long yellow-green canes. It flowers in flushes but usually has some blooms.
Sweet wafting scent.
All of the receptacle has sessile glands. The pedicel is smooth.
The leaves are light green and matte. They have 5-7 leaflets, often folded from the midrib, drooping, and elongated.
Slightly zigzag growth.
The prickles age to grey, are mainly on watershoots, and are often paired.
Very large arching shrub-climber (plant in photo opposite is 11 years old).
Healthy.





Glossary, and some tips



← Cane

Stipule

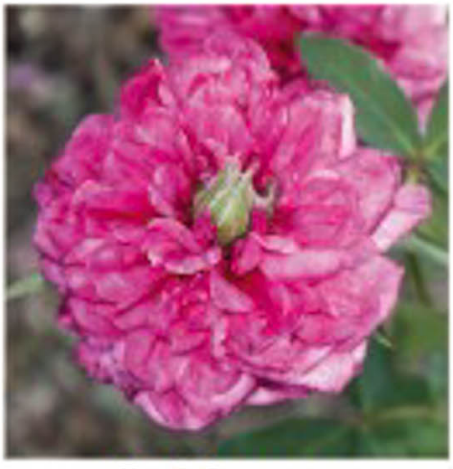
← Leaflet. Botanically, the leaf is all parts resting on this hand.

← Sepal

← Receptacle

← Pedicel

Foliaceous sepals, left bud.



Proliferation.

Balling: when petals stick together so the flower can't open.
Disbudding: we remove most flower buds the first year, more so in a drought year, to encourage the plant to produce branches and leaves, especially low down.
Foliaceous sepals: sepals that are leaf-like. They can vary with the season.
Guard petals: the outermost petals of a flower.
Noisettes derive from a cross between *R. moschata* and a China rose, c. 1811; they are climbers with clusters of small scented flowers in pink or white shades. Crossing them with Teas gave mostly larger flowers and a wider colour range.
Petal number: Single roses have 4 to 8 petals. Double have 17-25.
Proliferation: the growth of other bud/s within an open flower (or beside it in some other plants). It's ugly but not a disease, and the bloom can just be cut off.
Quartered: having petals clustered in groups (not necessarily four).
ROR: renamed old rose. Sometimes used after a study name.
Self-cleaning: dropping petals of spent flowers.
Species names are printed in italics.

The first rule of preserving foundling roses is: Never dig up the original plant unless the bulldozers are on their way. You might kill it.

Before you give a found or bred rose a name, it's best to check that the name you want to use isn't already taken, on www.helpmefind.com.

If you have an old rose you'd like to identify, start with www.heritageroses.org.au/articles/identifying-roses/.

A rose by any other name would smell as sweet…

Around 1,000 Tea roses were available in Australia in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. With changing fashions in gardening, they have been largely supplanted by their descendants, and barely a hundred remain here now. Some of the survivors have lost their original names. This booklet presents brief descriptive notes, where they were found, and photos of potentially identifying details, for unknown Teas and Noisettes, mainly collected from old gardens and churchyards.

Teas are highly variable, and early descriptions were mostly nonspecific (sometimes with marketing bias), so the true names of these foundlings may never be known, but the mystery adds to their charm.

"Mystery Cream Tea"

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